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**Bryan Rodner Carr**
A photographer and film editor, Carr has collaborated with brands from Spotify to Beats by Dre, and his photos have been featured in publications including *Complex and Harper's Bazaar*. Most recently Carr met up with Shan Boodram in Los Angeles, USA, to snap the irrepressible YouTube sexologist for *Let's Play*.

**Gregory Pardlo**
In *Subject, Verb, Object,* the Pulitzer Prize–winning poet reflects on the consequences of the masculinity he learned from his father. A professor of creative writing at Rutgers University in the US, Pardlo has a new book, *Air Traffic: A Memoir of Ambition and Manhood in America*, out April 10 from Knopf.

**Sloane Crosley**
With her signature blend of incisive wit and charm, Crosley returns to Playboy for the first time in a decade with *Sorry Not Sorry,* an examination of the post-Weinstein deluge of male mea culpas. *The Vanity Fair* contributing editor's book of essays *Look Alive Out There* is out April 3 from Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

**Edel Rodriguez**
Over a career spanning more than two decades, Rodriguez has logged many artistic achievements, most recently winning the 2017 Cover of the Year award from the American Society of Magazine Editors. His bold illustrations accompany several pieces in the *Gender Revolution* package.

**Mickey Rapkin**
In *Help Wanted,* Rapkin, whose previous Playboy contributions include reports on denim hunting and partying in Denmark, discovers a non-toxic male milieu: support groups. His first book, *Pitch Perfect,* about the world of college a cappella groups, inspired the hit film franchise.

**Harper Smith**
Celebrity photoshoots are old hat for Smith, whose masterly portraits of stars including Kate Bosworth and Rita Ora have earned her highly sought-after magazine covers. A Midwestern native, Smith is a transplant to Texas, making her the perfect person to shoot actor Jesse Plemons for our latest instalment of *20Q*.

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**ON THE COVER** *Nannette Hammond, photography by Bruce Colero*

*No 3 March 2018*

# PLAYBOY *of* WORLD

## TOUCHDOWNS AND TURNTABLES

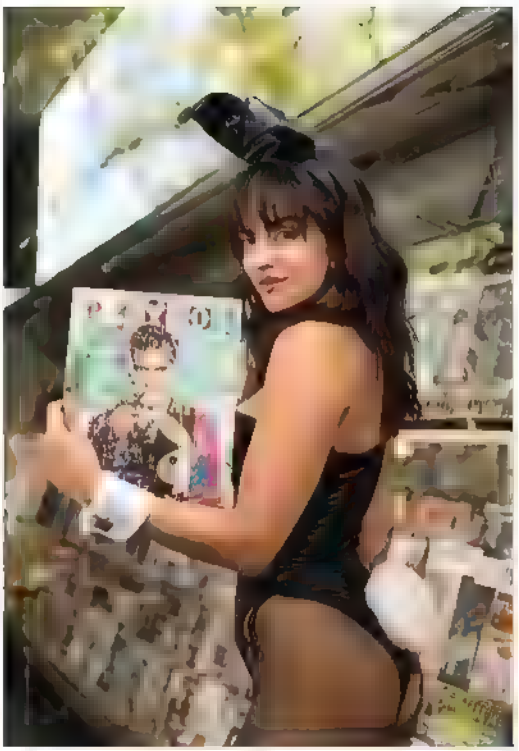
We got into the Super Bowl spirit on January 21 with Playmates Ashley Hobbs and Gia Marie at an exclusive event at West Hollywood's London hotel, where FanDuel's top fantasy players watched the Patriots and the Eagles win their championship games — and one lucky player won a trip for two to Super Bowl LII. The night before that historic contest, Snoop Dogg took to the turntables at our Big Game Weekend Party in Minneapolis. VIP guests enjoyed bottle service and bottomless spirits — gin and juice optional — not to mention Snoop's drop-it-like-it's-hot set.

## HELLO, 2018

As champagne flowed, our Playmates, Bunnies and guests rang in the new year in style with Chief Creative Officer Cooper Hefner, who gave Playboy's first toast of 2018. Revelers enjoyed dance performances and live music (plus fun with sparklers) before and after the big countdown. Here's to another sexy, sophisticated year!

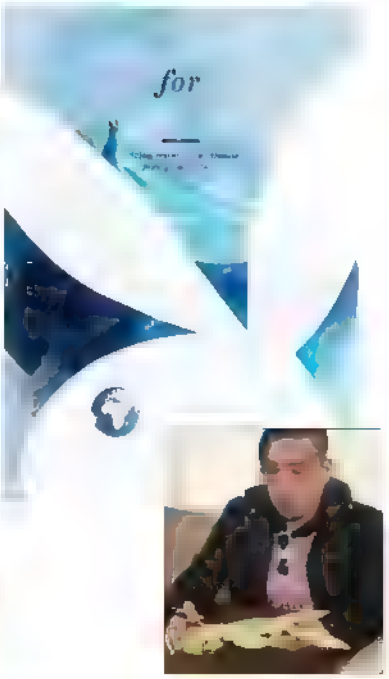
## *Jazz Fest Turns 40*

Musical greats Charles Lloyd and Lucinda Williams will headline the 40th Playboy Jazz Festival at the Hollywood Bowl June 9 and 10. Other acts include the Ramsey Lewis Quartet and Daymé Arocena; longtime host George Lopez returns to emcee the event. Buy tickets at HollywoodBowl.com.



## PLAYMATES

April 2017 Playmate Nina Daniele put on her Bunny ears and tail to promote our special tribute edition honouring *Playboy* founder Hugh M. Hefner, wheat-pasting posters and visiting newsstands in Hollywood. "Hef was a progressive thinker, a proponent of sexual expression and an early and adamant advocate of civil rights", says Nina. "He changed the world for the better." How right she is. Limited copies of the special edition remain, buy yours at PlayboyShop.com.




## *Artists Donate Rabbit-Inspired Pieces for Climate Benefit*

That feeling when you just don't want to let go? We had it big-time this February when we auctioned off more than a dozen original artworks — including Joe Suzuki's Happy Accident, which he stopped by our office to sign (above) — to raise money for environmental initiatives. Each one-of-a-kind Playboy-inspired piece was generously donated by our Creatives for Climate artists, including Scott Campbell, Tristan Eaton, Ben Venom and January 1996 Playmate Victoria Fuller. The auction took place online and culminated in a party at the swanky 70th-floor OUE Skyspace in downtown LA, USA.

## *Time to Take a Stand*

In January, Playboy proudly donated $5000 to the Time's Up legal defence fund. "Encouraging women to have a voice at all tables will undoubtedly make the country and the world a far better place", said Cooper Hefner.

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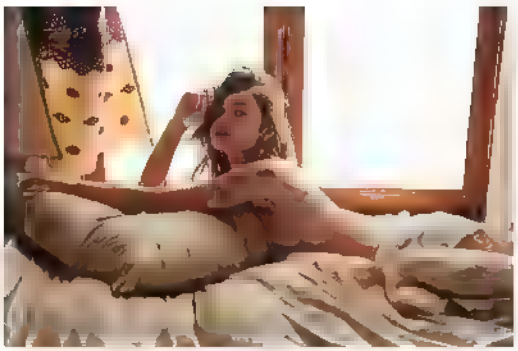
**ONLINE EXCLUSIVE GALLERIES**

- Mia Khalifa, photographed by Levon Muradian.



Add a comment
"The difference between alpha males and beta males is the way they behave—not what they think about feminism."
"As a feminist, I do not want women to have the power. I want the sexes to share it."
"My husband is a feminist. I would never marry a man who rejected equality. I find this resistance to gender equality baffling."
"Men will always pretend to agree with lots of things that women say, even stupid things, in order to get laid."
Like

**BONUS MAGAZINE CONTENT**

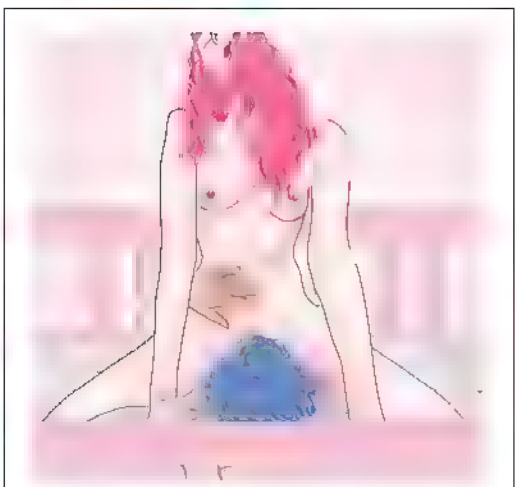
- Sex expert Shan Boodram is everything your high school sex-ed teacher wasn't. See more of the Let's Play subject in an extended photo gallery.
- Graham Dunn shows us a few more shots of author and sex-adventurer Karley Sciortino.

**THE BEST OF OUR ARCHIVES**

- Sensational accusations, inquisitorial investigations, unfounded conclusions. As the #MeToo movement grows, so does the number of its critics. In January 1986, Hugh Hefner wrote about a similar sociosexual debate and the rise of what he termed "sexual McCarthyism".
- Revisit all our past March and April magazine covers. No doubt you'll find a favourite — and enjoy a little nostalgia too.

**CULTURE, POLITICS & MORE**

- We try out a "magical" wine-infused cannabis tour, a new trend in drug tourism.
- Where have all the male porn stars gone? Eric Spitznagel investigates.
- A man in Louisiana, USA, called the Veterans Crisis Line for help. When sheriff's deputies responded, the vet ended up dead. Ian Frisch asks what went wrong.



Can a vibrator really replace a man? Playboy Advisor Bridget Phetasy has doubts (luckily)

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# SHAN BOODRAM

Think of Shan Boodram as the guru of sex and relationships. "I'm not trying to be back in aisle 12 with the butt plugs", says the 32-year-old clinical sexologist and host of the Facebook series Make Up or Break Up. "My goal is getting to the heart of intimacy. You don't have to have a shitty love life or sex life." Growing up in Toronto, Canada, Boodram was so sexually precocious that her parents banned her from stripping her Barbie dolls. But as she matured, a string of less than stellar sexual experiences left her baffled. "I was 19 and thought, This can't be it. There's no way all these movies were made about this thing that's awful", she says. After a summer spent reading sex books with "great info packaged in the most boringest way", she found her niche: marrying erotic enticement with smart sex education. A book followed — a collection of first-person testimonies entitled Laid — and a YouTube presence bloomed. More than 20 million views later, "Shan Boody" is one of the most respected new sexperts in the pop-psych sphere — but she's missing one staple of a millennial sex life. "I never get dick pics", she says a little wistfully. "I wouldn't mind getting some!" *Rebecca Hathcoat*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
**BRYAN RODNER CARR**

# TONGUE THAI'D

*Mekhong, the Thai spiced spirit that's popping up at adventurous bars all over the place will slap you in the face*

**BY** MATT ZURAS **PHOTOGRAPHY BY** MAURIZIO DI IORIO

If you're searching for a liquor to challenge both your palate and your home mixology skills, look no further than Mekhong, the so-called spirit of Thailand. Considering its dirt-cheapness and popularity among tourists in Thailand, you may have tried this sugarcane-and-rice-derived stuff en route to a full-moon party in Pattaya, and no one would blame you for not remembering its idiosyncratic flavour. But in recent years it has ventured abroad, becoming a powerful tool in the arsenals of inventive bartenders.

With a gingery-sweet kick that doesn't quite mask its chemical undertones, Mekhong is best avoided neat. "This is not a sipping whisky", says Andy Ricker, chef and owner of Pok Pok in the US. Ricker first encountered the spirit at a Koh Phangan disco in 1987, and today he uses it in his restaurant's popular Khing & I cocktail (see his recipe at right).

After debuting in 1941 via a government-owned distillery, Mekhong quickly became the top tipple for Thais, only to be dethroned decades later with the emergence of the higher-proof but equally affordable SangSom.

"Generally speaking, the Thai whiskeys can be described as vaguely medicinal", Ricker says of both spirits. "That diesel-y flavour you get from distilled rice spirits is in there, and that sweet flavour from the cane and lots of residual sugar and caramel colouring too."

In fact, Mekhong is not a whisky at all, though it's often referred to as such. It's closer to a spiced rum, but it's not exactly that either. Mekhong is its own thing, and like a wedge of Stilton or a farmhouse cider, it has an assertive character that may take some getting used to. Fortunately, you're free to experiment without blacking out. Despite Mekhong's bold taste, its alcohol by volume measure is a relatively low 35 percent.

Ricker suggests following the Thai example and diluting Mekhong with water, seltzer or cola and enjoying over a long meal. Creative drinkers might substitute Mekhong into any cocktail that calls for spiced rum, such as a dark and stormy or a mai tai — or should we say a mai *Thai*?

## GLOBAL TOASTING

● **Palinka:** A powerful brandy, palinka is beloved in Hungary, where locals make this illegal moonshine from various fruits. Drink it straight or with soda, or try it in a pisco sour.

● **Aguardiente:** Colombia's version of "fire water" is strong on anise but light on alcohol, peaking around 29 percent ABV. Often consumed neat, aguardiente makes a respectable ersatz pastis in cocktails.

● **Boukha:** Depending on the brand, Tunisia's fig brandy can taste like either gasoline or an autumn orchard. Try Boukha Bokobsa, a lovely eau-de-vie that dates back to the 1880s and plays well in fruit-forward drinks.

## *Khing & I*

**Pair this piquant cocktail with your favourite Thai dish**

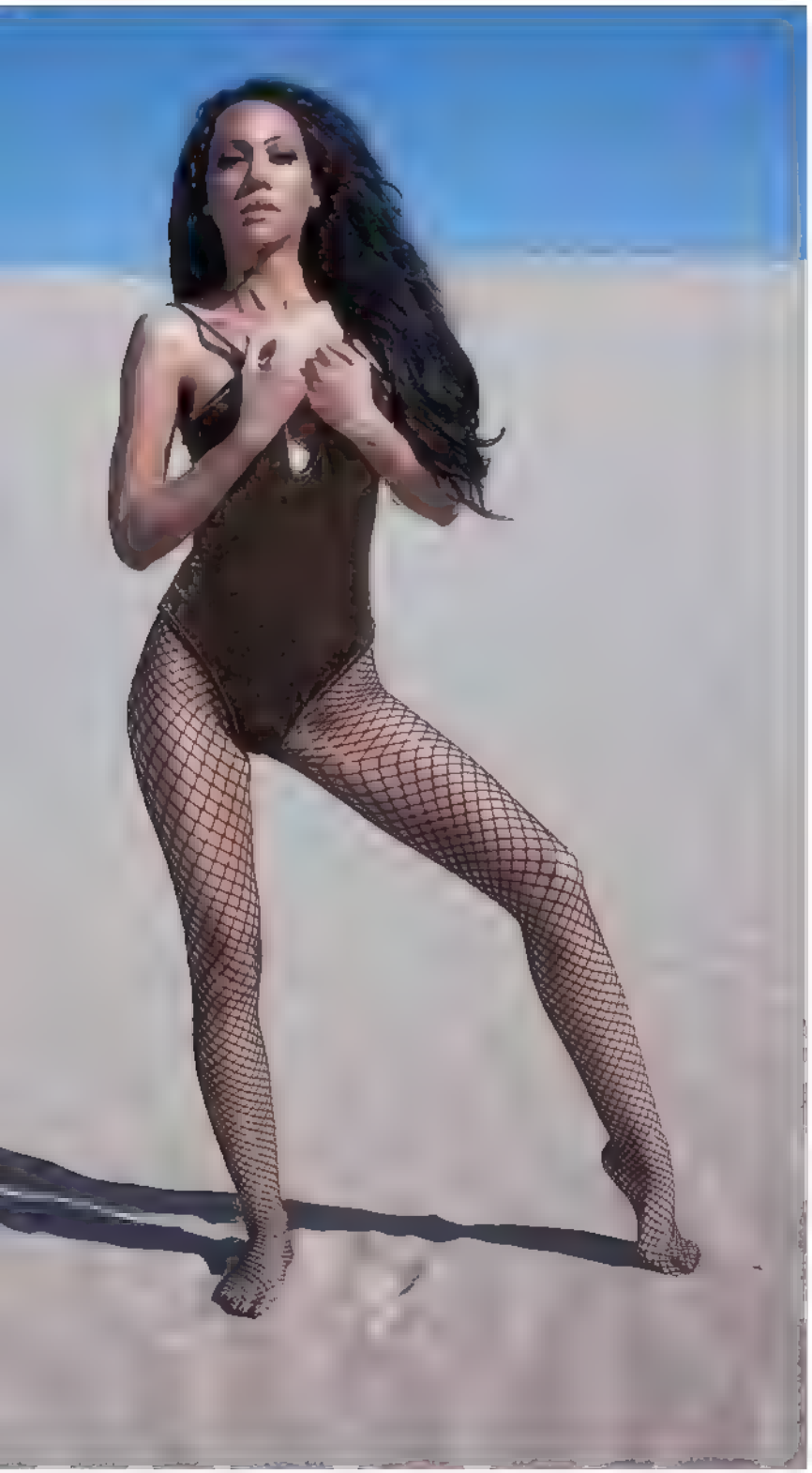
3–4 thin slices of ginger, skin removed
45ml Mekhong
45ml fresh lime juice
30ml ginger simple syrup
Key lime wedge for garnish

**Prepare**
Muddle ginger slices in cocktail shaker. Add Mekhong, lime juice, syrup and ice. Shake and pour into rocks glass. Garnish with lime wedge.

Mekhong

# Lana ELYSE

PLAYMATE



**Were you excited to shoot for Playboy?**
I'm very excited and honoured to shoot for Playboy! It's been one of my dreams as a model to be part of the Playboy family.

**Tell us something surprising about you?**
Something that you might be surprised about is not only do I work in front of the lens, but I also work behind the lens. I've been shooting all of my own work over the past couple of years since it's been more convenient, and I've developed a love for photography.

**Describe yourself in one sentence.**
I'm driven, positive, friendly, and have a great sense of humour!

**What are some of your hobbies?**
Photography! It's an unexpected love and it's something I have fun doing and plan on doing for a long time. It's an amazing, but expensive hobby!

**What is your biggest turn-on?**
My biggest turn on would be a guy who is confident, is a good listener and has a sense of humour. A sense of humour is a must!

**What turns you off the most?**
What turns me off the most would be arrogance; there's a line between confidence and arrogance, and I've definitely come across some arrogant and condescending guys in the past and it was exhausting.

**Describe to us your perfect date.**
My perfect date would just be taking a small trip somewhere, it can be anywhere out. Of course, we can get dinner along the way, but I want to be out somewhere in the fresh air with him, talking about anything and just going wherever our feet take us.

What would you consider to be your biggest challenge **as a model so far?**
My biggest challenge as a model so far has been establishing a name for myself. I've been modelling for a long time, before Instagram! It's been difficult doing most of this on my own and doing submissions, contacting editors, all that stuff. I love modelling, especially glamour modelling, and it's been tough to find my own place in it. There have been plenty of times I've thought certain goals weren't going to happen, nobody will accept my pictorial, nobody will answer me back, I just felt down at times. But for whatever reason I just kept going, and now here I am with my own place in Playboy!

**Any last words you would like to share with our readers?**
I would love to say thank you to those who have been following and believing in me for a long time. I also hope I've created an interest with you, the reader, and hope you continue to follow me to see what's next. I might even photograph one of your favourite models one day. Much love to you all.

# EPIC GAMES

*Defy doomsday by taking up arms and joining the resistance, own the octagon on your journey to MMA superstardom or stunt and jump yourself all the way to ultimate glory!*

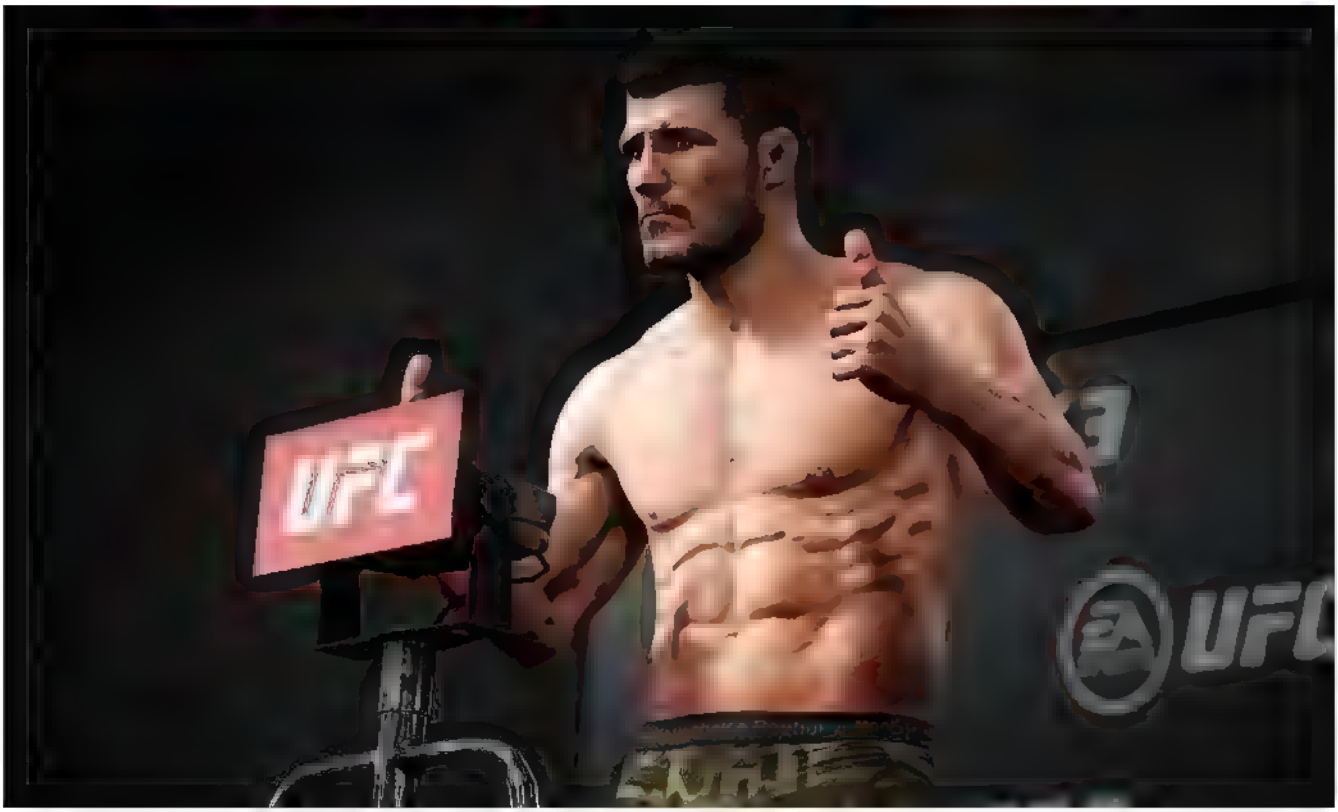
ANDRE COETZER

**FAR CRY 5**

The Far Cry series throughout the years has taken players to exotic islands, Himalayan mountains, the African bushveld and even back to prehistoric times. So where to next for the popular series? Well the good old United States of America of course. Far Cry 5 takes place in the serene looking, yet deeply twisted areas of Montana. As the new junior deputy of Hope County, Montana, players will find that their arrival accelerates a years-long silent coup by a fanatical doomsday cult, the Project at Eden's Gate, igniting a violent take over of the county. Under siege and cut off from the rest of the world, the player will join forces with residents of Hope County and from the Resistance. Far Cry 5 not only features a brand new location and villain, but also features new vehicles in the form of aeroplanes, opening up the impressive open world even more. Attack enemy bases from the sky and unleash your justice from above. To take down the cult, players will need to utilise any and all weapons at their disposal, including ranged weapons such as guns and grenades and melee weapons like a sledgehammer or baseball bat. Additionally, players can recruit Guns for Hire from a large cast of characters, or even Fangs for Hire, specialised animals like bears and cougars to complement players' playstyles whether they're going in stealthily or forcefully. How players approach each situation and the chaos they create is up to them. Far Cry 5 is an interesting new direction for the series, but with all the elements that made the series such a hit firmly in place. It's a clever, funny and terrifying first-person shooter and is already a candidate for game of the year for 2018

**EA SPORTS UFC 3**

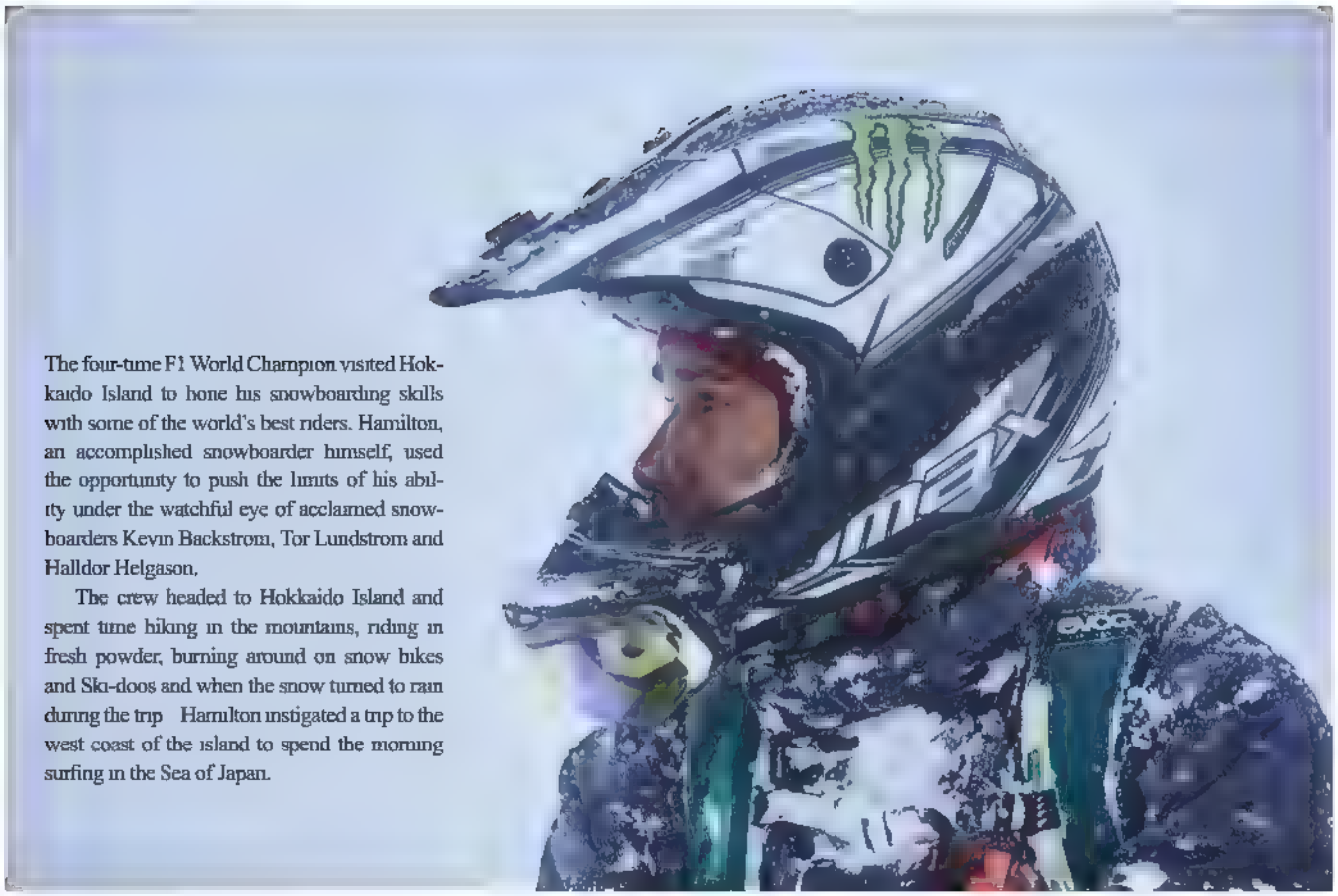
EA Sports returns to the Octagon for another attempt at recreating the most intense sport on the planet. With UFC 3, every punch, kick, block and counter has been recaptured and rebuilt using cutting-edge Real Player Motion Tech. With over 5000 new animations captured and rebuilt from the ground up, you can now move, strike and create seamless combinations with the fluidity and freedom of the world's best UFC fighters. Slip and strike while in full motion to execute dangerous counter-attacks, adding new strategy and competition to every fight. The biggest new addition to UFC 3 however is that of the G.O.A.T. Career mode. For the first time ever, the choices you make outside the octagon impact your greatness inside it. Between each bout, make promotional choices that will help you gain fans, build hype for your next fight and potentially earn you more lucrative contracts from the UFC. However you will not start as a UFC fighter, that honour needs to be earned. Instead you start your MMA career in the World Fighting Alliance, and it's up to you to put in the kind of performances that will catch the eye of UFC boss Dana White. Once drafted into the UFC, it is up to you on how to hype your fights, annoy your rivals and march on towards the title of the G.O.A.T. EA Sports has always been known to create good-looking sport titles, but UFC 3 might just be the best looking fighting game ever made. The player likenesses are scarily accurate and the movements are as lifelike as you can get. UFC 3 is a massive step forward for the franchise, making it arguably the best fighting game available today. Even if you're not a fan of the world of mixed martial arts, you will find something to love in UFC 3.


UFC

**MX VS ATV ALL OUT**

Since it's initial release back in 2005, the MX VS ATV series has been synonymous with fun, fast-paced off-road racing experiences. In its 13-year existence, the series has grown into a powerhouse with each iteration improving on the last. Now in 2018, MX VS ATV ALL OUT is without a doubt the best in the series. Choosing between bikes, ATVs and UTVs, you will get to refine your rider style at your private compound and race across a massive open world to compete in various game modes. New to the series is the Freestyle mode which allows you to perform insane stunts across various terrains, the bigger and flashier the stunts the closer you will get to victory. It's an incredibly fun mode that is easy to play but hard to master. Multiplayer has also seen a big upgrade with 2 player split-screen local co-op play and an impressive 16 player online mode. Challenge your friends and fellow all-terrain fans from across the world for ultimate glory. As with previous MX VS ATV games, you get to select from numerous gear and vehicle companies from around the world, adding to the impressive realism of the series. Upgrading your vehicles is always a vital part to winning in style or being left behind and MX VS ATV All Out gives you even more freedom to tune your ride to your exact specs. Created from the ground up for current consoles, MX VS ATV All Out looks fantastic and plays better than ever before. If you're a fan of the series or new to the exciting world of all-terrain racing then MX VS ATV All Out is without a doubt for you.

# SNOW, SURF AND SKI-DOOS



The four-time F1 World Champion visited Hokkaido Island to hone his snowboarding skills with some of the world's best riders. Hamilton, an accomplished snowboarder himself, used the opportunity to push the limits of his ability under the watchful eye of acclaimed snowboarders Kevin Backstrom, Tor Lundstrom and Halldor Helgason.

The crew headed to Hokkaido Island and spent time hiking in the mountains, riding in fresh powder, burning around on snow bikes and Ski-doos and when the snow turned to rain during the trip Hamilton instigated a trip to the west coast of the island to spend the morning surfing in the Sea of Japan.

**"IT WAS GOOD BEING ABLE TO GO ON A TRIP LIKE THIS AT THE START OF 2018. IT WAS REALLY GOOD HANGING OUT WITH SOME INCREDIBLE ATHLETES AND PUSHING MY SKILLS ON A BOARD WAS SO ENJOYABLE – THE PERFECT PREPARATION FOR THE F1 SEASON AHEAD."**

*—Hamilton*

RED

"IT WAS A GREAT TRIP TO BE PART OF AND LEWIS'S RIDING WAS IMPRESSIVE. MONSTER ENERGY ALWAYS COMES UP WITH COOL PROJECTS AND BEING ABLE TO RIDE WITH ATHLETES FROM COMPLETELY DIFFERENT DISCIPLINES WAS SO MUCH FUN – I HOPE WE GET TO RIDE TOGETHER AGAIN." *—Lundstrom*

IMAGES COURTESY OF MONSTER ENERGY.

LIZZIE
LEE

**Were you excited to shoot for Playboy?**
Of course! It has been my dream and the ultimate, biggest goal of my modelling career for as long as I can remember!

**Tell us something surprising about you?**
My mom was born in France, so I have dual citizenship and I'm fluent in French

**Describe yourself in one sentence**
I am a fun-loving, down to earth, energetic, sexy, California girl with a passion for art and the outdoors as well as a knack for baking from scratch.

**What are some of your hobbies?**
I love riding my bike, hiking, working out, and cooking.

**What is your biggest turn-on?**
I love a man who is a true gentleman and has a beard

**What turns you off the most?**
I can't stand men who are cocky or disrespectful

**Describe your perfect date**
The perfect date would include being picked up, surprised with flowers, the door opened for me, and a nice steak dinner with good conversation

**What would you consider to be your biggest challenge as a model so far?**
Staying humble and maintaining my appearance and self-confidence, all while dealing with an extremely high level of competition

**Any last words you would like to share with our readers?**
Follow me on social media where you can see my uncensored glamour photos. I love my fans, so feel free to message me on any of my pages - I will respond if you're nice!

**Want to see more of Lizzie? Then follow her on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and Patreon @lizzieleemodel and visit her website lizzieleemodel.com.**

SEXUAL HEALING
SCOTT PORCH
GRAHAM D

In the 1960s, George Plimpton talked his way onto an American NFL team for his book Paper Lion. In the aughts, AJ Jacobs followed the scriptures to the letter and wrote The Year of Living Biblically. More recently, Karley Sciortino spent about a year as a dominatrix and another as a sugar baby, documenting her experiences via her multiplatform personal brand Slutever.

If you're familiar with Sciortino, it's probably because you've seen the sex column she writes for Vogue.com or the video she made for Vice (31 million views and counting) in which she gets down with a male sex doll on camera or the decidedly NC-17 episode of the Netflix series Easy on which she plays a prostitute. Her work bridges memoir, performance art, investigative journalism, social activism and an unwavering dedication to firsthand experience.

The 32-year-old New Yorker has leaned into the term slut in the decade or so that she's been writing about her sexual experiences—in a blog, in a web series, in a documentary show for Viceland and in a new book for Grand Central, all of which are called Slutever—the same way people have claimed pejoratives such as bitch, queer and Obamacare to free those terms from negative connotations.

"I like the idea that what I do is a mixture of journalism, personal curiosity, adventure and something like sexual anthropology," Sciortino says. "This idea that to be a journalist is to be a fly on the wall isn't always the case today. I've never been good at sitting on the sidelines and watching things objectively. I want to document things from the inside".

By immersing herself in fringe cultures, she has ventured beyond societal and personal preconceptions, exploring kinks and rituals that would strike most people as deeply weird or even pathological. As a dominatrix's assistant, she whipped middle-aged investment bankers till they bled. She crouched naked over their faces and peed in their mouths.

> "I ADMIRE THAT WILLINGNESS TO GO GET THE THING OTHER PEOPLE STIGMATISE."

"When you encounter something different or strange", she says, "you're like, What the f#ck? My impulse is to ask, What does that mean? Why are they like that? What's relatable about it?"

In her work, she argues that the reasons sexual promiscuity is societally shunned—because it lowers morals, ruins self-esteem, creates co-dependency and has all the other pernicious effects your mother warned you about—repeatedly fail to stand up to scrutiny. Her book cites a 2014 Cornell study that found students who engaged in casual sex generally reported lower levels of stress and depression than students who did not. She sees the sex-as-therapy model as an explanation for much of what today passes as deviance.

"If people have the desire to seek out a dominatrix or be kidnapped or go to sex parties or have many sexual partners, I kind of admire that willingness and ability to go get the thing other people stigmatize," Sciortino says. "So many of us don't have that ability. We can't even admit to ourselves what we want."

And while the path to greater understanding may require the kind of fearless and open-ended investigation Sciortino practices, the solution, in a certain light, is remarkably simple: "I think there are a whole lot of problems we could solve with a little more sex." ■

## *Dear Karley*

From dating etiquette to polyamory, Sciortino weighs in on five burning questions

**What's one common mistake men make on first dates?**
Being indecisive. I hate when a guy half asks me out, like texting, "We should hang." It's like, should we? If you're going to ask someone on a date, go in 100 percent. It can be as simple as "Hey, I would love to hang with you. Are you free Friday for dinner?" Then choose a restaurant. To be honest, it's not rocket science.

**Can a straight man be a "proud slut"?**
Because slut is a word that has long been used to put down women, it feels awkward for a guy to define himself as one. It's like a straight girl calling herself a fag—it's just creepy. However, I absolutely think straight guys can be sexually exploratory and have multiple partners in a respectful and healthy way, just like anyone else.

**What's the best setting for a date?**
The idea of going on a first date that doesn't involve alcohol actually feels psychotic to me. Unless you relish social awkwardness and never want to have sex again, all dates should take place in a dimly lit bar after 7pm. There's no need to reinvent the wheel.

**Is monogamy outdated?**
I think as a culture we are beginning to open up to the idea of non-monogamy as a viable option. Monogamy is really hard, but letting your partner be railed by someone else seems like actual torture for most people. So I think it will be a long time before monogamy becomes passé.

**What's one thing every Playboy reader should know about sex?**
I think it would generally be helpful if everyone were taught (from a young age, if possible) that we should approach our sex lives the same way we approach all other aspects of our lives, from our careers to our hobbies: Essentially, it's something you have to invest time and effort into. You're going to f#ck up, it will be discouraging and difficult at times, and you aren't entitled to anything. But in the end, if you work hard, it will be rewarding.

# A BRIEF HISTORY OF FAKE

(Mr. President, pay attention)

## 2017

***WAS THE YEAR OF FAKE NEWS:*** *Spurred by Russian meddling during the 2016 US election and the freshly anointed president's contempt for much of the mainstream media, multiple dictionaries added the term to their pages, and its usage increased 365 percent between 2016 and 2017. Collins Dictionary deemed it 2017's "word of the year", beating out such formidable contenders as echo chamber, Antifa and cuffing season. Never to be outdone, President Trump capped off the year by claiming he had invented the term, which, in addition to appearing in American newspapers since 1890, has existed in various peripheral forms for about 500 years.*

*If 2017 was the year of fake news, 2018 will, we hope, be the year of fact-checking. And with digital giants from Facebook to Google announcing plans to add factual gatekeepers to their content systems, this is a good time to take the long view and clear up what's real about fake news.*

## 1622

**In God We Trust**

Pope Gregory XV establishes the religious organisation Congregatio de Propaganda Fide, or Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith.

## 1782

**"The Substance Is Truth"**

Seeking to drum up support for American independence, Benjamin Franklin creates a fake issue of a real Boston newspaper, The Independent Chronicle. One concocted story accuses British soldiers of hiring Native Americans to scalp colonial women, children and soldiers.

## 1807

**Thin Skins**

"Nothing can now be believed which is seen in a newspaper", says President Thomas Jefferson, irritated that the press has taken a critical stance against him. Sound familiar?

## 1835

**Shoot the Moon**

The penny press — a breed of cheap broadsheets consisting of sensationalised opinion and gossip disguised as real news — surges in popularity. A highlight: the Great Moon Hoax, a story about an astronomer who reportedly observed unicorns on the moon.

## 1890

**First Faker**

A Cincinnati Commercial Tribune article entitled "Secretary Brunnell Declares Fake News About His People Is Being Telegraphed Over the Country" marks the first known appearance of the term fake news in print. (The hashtag will have to wait another 120 years or so.)

## 1938

**Martian Mayhem**

Orson Welles's radio adaptation of the HG Wells novel The War of the Worlds convinces some listeners that aliens have landed on Earth — causing widespread panic, two heart attacks and a national debate about the role of the Federal Communications Commission.

## 1960s

**Just Kidding**

Yippies founding father Paul Krassner launches The Realist, a monthly magazine of real and fake news (or, more accurately, satire) written by the likes of Ken Kesey, Richard Pryor, Lenny Bruce, Norman Mailer and Robert Crumb.

## 1964

**LBJ Lies**

The United States ramps up its involvement in the Vietnam war after President Lyndon Johnson states on national television that unprovoked attacks have been made on US ships in the Gulf of Tonkin. The story makes national headlines in both The New York Times and The Washington Post, though it's later revealed that some of LBJ's remarks are false.

## 1975

**Good Night, and Good Laughs**

Chevy Chase hosts the first instalment of the "Weekend Update" news parody, Saturday Night Live's longest-running recurring sketch.

By LIZ SUMAN & SAMANTHA SAIYAVONGSA

# News

## ... IS OLD NEWS

### 1988

**Tu Stultus Est**
University of Wisconsin students Chris Johnson and Tim Keck found The Onion. A few of its satirical stories mistaken for real over the years: "Kim Jong-Un Named The Onion's Sexiest Man Alive for 2012", "Conspiracy Theorist Convinces Neil Armstrong Moon Landing Was Faked" and "Harry Potter Books Spark Rise in Satanism Among Children"

### 1991

**Jennings & Lenin**
On ABC World News Tonight, Peter Jennings reports that Soviet officials will auction off Vladimir Lenin's body for $15 million in a "desperate move to raise foreign currency". The source? A satirical piece in a Forbes supplement. Other US media outlets follow the false lead, Moscow is not amused.

### 1995

**Fact Finders**
David and Barbara Mikkelson launch one of the world's first fact-checking websites. Today, Snopes.com continues to lead the brigade of 60-plus similar sites that have cropped up to keep pace with the spread of misinformation

### 2003

**Funny Fakers**
Jon Stewart's late-night comedy series The Daily Show takes spoof news to a new level. In a "Bush vs Bush" skit, a mock split-screen broadcast juxtaposes contradictory foreign-policy comments made by George W Bush

### 2016

**MAY**
**Blue Bias**
A former Facebook employee claims in a Gizmodo report that the curators of the social networking site's "trending" sidebar team shun posts with conservative viewpoints.

**NOVEMBER**
**Only the Pizza Is Real**
A story accusing Hillary Clinton of running a child sex-trafficking ring in the basement of a Washington,DC pizza parlour goes viral — and continues into 2018

**DECEMBER**
**Truth Tactics**
Facebook announces partnerships with third-party fact-checking organisations including the Poynter Institute and Snopes.com to combat "hoaxes and fake news"

### 2017

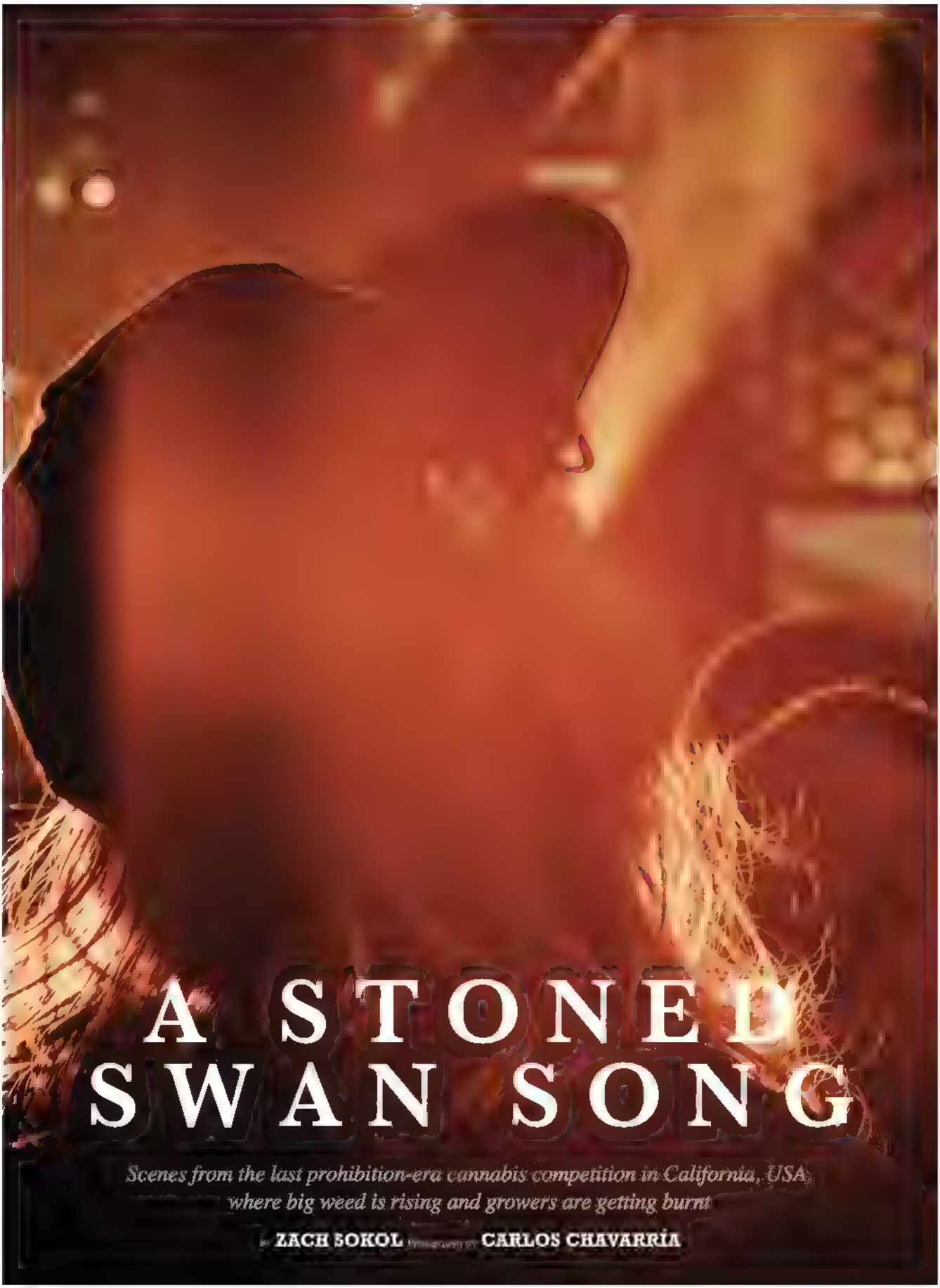
**Tabloid Cloaking**
Abusers of Google's AdSense platform drop fake-news ads onto the home pages of fact-checking websites including Snopes.com and PolitiFact. The clickbait, disguised as news stories from publications such as Vogue and People, tricks readers with such headlines as why Melania isn't staying at the white house.

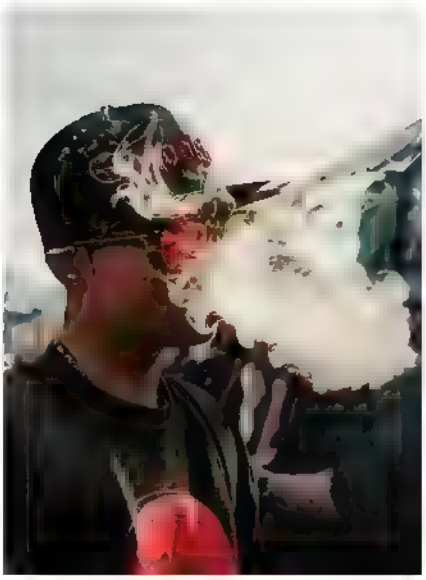
**Elevating an Error**
ABC News issues a "clarification" and suspends journalist Brian Ross for reporting that former US National Security Advisor Michael Flynn agreed to testify that Donald Trump had instructed him to communicate with Russian officials while Trump was still a candidate. (In fact, Trump didn't make the request until he was president-elect.) "More Networks and 'papers' should do the same with their Fake News!" tweets Trump.

**SEPTEMBER**
**Death of a Fake Newsman**
Paul Horner, prolific author of fake news items, dies at the age of 38. He claimed he was the reason Donald Trump was elected and also defended his work as "political satire".

**OCTOBER**
**Heavy Meddle**
Google, Facebook and Twitter face a Senate hearing after allowing Kremlin-linked propagandists to flood their platforms with false information designed to help Donald Trump win the 2016 presidential election.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY **DIEGO PATIÑO**


A STONED SWAN SONG
Scenes from the last prohibition-era cannabis competition in California, USA, where big weed is rising and growers are getting burnt
by ZACH SOKOL CARLOS CHAVARRÍA



The skyline was filled with smoke for the first leg of the eight-hour drive from Los Angeles to Santa Rosa — home to the 2017 Emerald Cup. The forbidding view on the way up was the result of the now-historic Thomas Fire, but at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds a different sort of smoke would cloud both the sky and the craniums of an estimated 30 000 attendees, all of whom had come to celebrate northern California's finest sun-grown marijuana.

A month before the indoor-outdoor fairgrounds were converted into a cornucopia of cannabis for the early-December weekend, a reported 80-plus FEMA trailers dotted the site, housing local victims who'd lost their homes in another fire, which had hit right around peak harvest season. Once the festival was in full bum, visitors were greeted by a jumbotron reading 'thank you first responders'.

Driving past the southern California wildfires was a fitting prelude to the Emerald Cup. Not only had the Sonoma County fires annihilated an estimated 140 000 acres of land, including a number of pot farms; they also highlighted the many legal and economic threats looming over the cannabis community in the countdown to near-total legalisation in the Golden State. In this case, smoke signalled much more than fire.

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Just over 80 years after the Marihuana Tax Act outlawed cannabis possession in the US, eight states plus Washington DC boast legalised recreational cannabis use for adults 21 and older, and 29 states and the District of Columbia have approved some form of medical-marijuana program. The global market for cannabis is expected to top $30 billion a year by 2021, and industry research suggests that California alone will see nearly $4 billion in legal sales in 2018. Meanwhile, a Gallup Poll from October 2017 found that 64 percent of Americans support legalisation — the highest percentage in favour since the organisation began asking the public about the topic in 1969 — and for the first time, a majority of Republican respondents are onboard.

The mainstreaming of weed arrives hand in hand with the so-called "green rush", characterised by unfledged players and deep-pocketed corporations betting on bud. Some Silicon Valley execs are switching from tech jobs to the weed game, while others, such as former Facebook President Sean Parker, have been quietly >>

funnelling millions into pro-legalisation lobbying efforts. Alcohol monoliths Constellation Brands, Anheuser-Busch and others are investing in the space and even considering branding their own pot products.

But it isn't all smiley faces and peace signs. As legalisation spreads and the green rush builds, mom-and-pop businesses face an existential threat. Due to California's new regulations for the adult-use market — plus federal restrictions that prevent safeguards and recourse against a myriad of vulnerabilities, wildfires included — the craft farmers who actually produce the crop are the most likely to get burned in the shift out of prohibition.

There is perhaps no better place to observe this end of an era than the folksy but increasingly Coachella-fied atmosphere of the Emerald Cup. At the 2017 event, people from all facets of the weed world were asking what will happen when their culture moves from outside the law to inside and if it will be recognisable by the end.

• • •

Cups showcase and judge the best marijuana, in all its consumable forms, from across the globe. They typically include expert lecturers and top 420-friendly talent, debut new innovations and brands, and offer aspiring cannabis entrepreneurs a platform to promote themselves to the industry and the public. Some events, such as the High Times Cannabis Cup, which started in Amsterdam in 1988 and has since expanded to several U.S. cities as well as Jamaica and Spain, function like a hybrid between a trade show and a big-box music festival.

The Emerald Cup, for its part, is so respected by the inner cannabis community that other competitions seem like shake fests in comparison. Founder Tim Blake, a 60-year-old northern California native and self-described "old-school outlaw dealer", launched the event in 2003. The inaugural Cup was held deep inside the Emerald Triangle: Mendocino, Humboldt and Trinity counties, the marijuana mecca known for producing the most cannabis in the US. Blake decked out the site with big altars and old couches for the few hundred people who came.

Back then, he says, the Emerald Cup was more a "celebration, a wild party and a friendly competition" among the couple dozen growers who entered their flowers to be judged by other regional cultivators. There were no vendors and few outsiders. "A lot of people came in masks; everyone was afraid we were going to get busted."

The organisers still aim to maintain the down-home feel that defined the competition in its salad days, but Blake concedes that the 2017 festival was a "whole different thing". For one, he partnered with music-and-event behemoth Red Light Management to produce it; hence performances by the Roots and Portugal. The Man. Tickets sold out, and Blake says his team received at least 2000 applications for vendor booths. And with more than 500 entrants for the flower competition alone, it became clear that a new era was blooming, for better or worse.

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Even outside the gates, the atmosphere was heady enough to spark a contact high. In the parking lot, dreaded white dudes scalped tickets

Swami Select founders Nikki Lastreto and Swami Chaitanya

or hawked bootleg shatter. A passerby handed me a copy of the Hare Krishna tome *Beyond Birth and Death*. A barefoot man stood in front of the entrance queue, asking people to sign up for a psychedelic-mushroom advocacy initiative. Most were smoking joints before they had even passed security.

Once inside, attendees found hundreds of booths set up in hangar-size tents and walkways lined with customised stalls. The aesthetic skewed toward either a rustic vibe, with repurposed wood and eco-friendly materials, or gaudy getups staffed by packs of men in flat-brim hats, ever ready to ignite a blowtorch and offer a dab hit. I sampled everything from experimental cannabinoid extracts to THC-infused salsa. There were even trained guard dogs for sale, fetching as much as $45 000. (The feds restrict medical-marijuana cardholders from owning guns, despite the Emerald Triangle's high rate of violent crime. Guard dogs are one form of legal protection.)

I'd never seen so much pot — or so many cash transactions — *en plein air*, and numerous booths sported signs proclaiming pounds available. Clearly some of these businesses wanted to move weight and cash in before adult-use legalisation and its new rules went into effect. By late afternoon, many of the ATMs scattered throughout the grounds were empty, which served as another reminder: Banks are hesitant to work with the cannabis industry, so buying and selling product is a cash-only affair. Once the sun went down, it was weird if your wallet wasn't empty — and you weren't the highest you'd ever been in public.

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After hours of mingling with dab bros, New Agey types, Cliven Bundy individualists and northern California lifers who started harvesting herb during the back-to-the-land movement of the 1960s and 1970s, I made my way to the Swami Select booth, run by established growers Nikki Lastreto and Swami Chaitanya. [*Editor's note. The author has worked with Swami Select on a column for the weed-focused web outlet Merry Jane.*] The couple has lived in Mendocino County since the late 1990s, and they've been judges at the Emerald Cup every year since its inception. That day, Chaitanya serenely rolled a cigar-sized joint packed with their homegrown Durban Sherbet, his long white beard hung dangerously close to the ground-up weed as he explained the process of *in vivo* marijuana judging. Later, over several phone calls, Lastreto describes the overwhelming feeling at the cup as "fear of the loss of our community".

"We've always worked closely together, but right now it's dividing up in a certain way", Lastreto says. We're talking about the raft of "emergency" regulations the state government passed in November 2017 — a move that left growers with a pathetically small window if they wished to be fully compliant by January. The result: a dichotomy forming between "the people who have the permit and the people who don't have the permit", she says.

"Now that we're in the mainstream market, you know how this world works", echoes Tim Blake. "There's only going to be so many Apples or IBMs." Like everyone else I spoke with, Blake believes the farmers who stalled on building a brand and going legit will be the first to get boxed out.

The impending competition, combined with both federal and state regulations — which are often at odds with one another — will "signal an end to the real outlaw, black-market culture up here over the next few years", Blake says. Most of these small operations are used to working outside the law, but if legal pressures force them to stay there, they have a slim chance of survival.

Blake was hesitant to vote for Proposition 64, also known as the Adult Use of Marijuana Act, but supported the ballot measure in hopes that the state "would actually do an orderly rollout and not wipe out small farmers". Now that it's here, he must embrace the idea that the cannabis industry will "become part of every mainstream society we have in this country and this world". Plus, he knows it will mean "huge, huge business. Imagine what it's going to be".

• • •

To be fully compliant with California's legalisation regulations, growers need to apply for the appropriate licences and adhere to a number of stipulations that could be at odds with how they run their farms. Insiders predict that only a fraction of the entire grower population will receive licences in 2018 and that the new rules could put moneyed operations at an advantage, allowing Big Weed to swallow the craft farmer whole.

For example, the California Department of Food and Agriculture did not set a cap on the total acreage a single grower, or licensee, can have, nor did it limit the number of small-farm licenses that a single entity can hold. "Marlboro can go put up a thousand-f#cking-acre grow if they want to", says Chris Anderson, founder of Redwood Roots, a southern Humboldt County-based collective of 37 farms that prides itself on being a multi-generation-farmer "family" "family." (At the Cup, its booth featured a glass jar with three forearm-size buds jutting out of it.)

Local jurisdictions can implement limits on grow operations, but the lack of a statewide mandate gives well-funded farmers (and corporations) an implicit leg up — especially when the price per pound drops, as it has in recent years, in response to greater supply than demand. Not to mention the new expenses legitimised farms will have to bear, such as required track-and-trace systems and annual operating-licence fees that can range from three to six figures.

"It's double f#cking us — it's triple f#cking us", says Anderson of the convoluted and ethically murky state regulations. The combination of bureaucratic intransigence and corporate privilege could quickly lead to big business "intentionally trying to starve out the small craft cannabis farmer, which is the whole reason this industry even exists anyway".

Plus, even though California has gone green, there's still the federal government to deal with. In early 2018, Attorney General Jeff Sessions revoked the Cole Memo, an Obama-era federal policy of non-interference in states that have legalised adult-use cannabis. Now prosecutors can more freely enforce federal law on the weed industry, even here.

Federal restrictions have already made things difficult for canna-businesses. On top of banking roadblocks, insurance options are all but non-existent — a big problem when your livelihood could literally go up in smoke with the next wildfire — and the federal tax code prevents pot-related companies from claiming credits and deductions on their income, resulting in astronomical tax rates. And if canna-businesses do face financial ruin, the feds prevent them from declaring bankruptcy. To a multi-generation grower who has been operating outside the law forever, it feels as though there's no winning.

He wasn't the only cup attendee wearing a two-piece weed suit

• • •

While everyone at the Cup wondered who would survive the next calendar year, some see hope in the burgeoning connoisseur's market. Comparisons to the wine industry abound. "It used to be for 100 bucks you could get a good bottle of wine," Blake says. "Now for 20 bucks you can get a $100 bottle of wine". He adds, "It's going to be the same with cannabis. As long as you make a great flower, you won't get big bucks, but you'll still have a real good market for it."

No one is worried about Brandon Scott Parker, a third-generation grower, fourth-generation Mendocino native and undeniable pot prodigy. Parker has won top awards at the Emerald Cup the past five years, allowing him to position his business in a way that all but guarantees longevity. His company, Third Gen/Dying Breed Seeds, has leveraged its story — premium, single-sourced, family farmed — and consumers go out of their way to try his "Holy Grail" strains.

Although there's no established appellation system for cannabis as there is for, say, Champagne, that could change through the efforts of the Mendocino Appellations Project and other groups. If the industry does adopt official titles that define a strain's terroir and agricultural heritage, as well as its cultivation requirements, small-scale farmers could potentially protect themselves through their botanical intellectual property, or at least make themselves stand out in the marketplace.

Until then, says Parker, it comes down to the consumer. Only an educated toker has the power to bolster the connoisseur's market and distinguish it from mass-produced weed. And once you go from Two Buck Chuck to Diamond Creek, it's hard to turn back.

But not everyone is a marijuana maestro, so Parker outlines other ways small operators can get through the first year in California's legal market — assuming they're willing to go legit. Like other top growers I interviewed, he suggests diversifying product lines, forming strategic partnerships with trustworthy green rushers and upping the ante on packaging and labelling. Still, he says, "not everyone is going to be left after the battle is over".

The Emerald Cup will almost certainly stick around, and Blake thinks it will be even bigger, but many of the boutique businesses I met — whose sublime herb melted my face off — won't. The regulations might even prevent all but licenced retailers such as dispensaries from selling product at future competitions. Would it even be the Emerald Cup if you couldn't sesh with the growers themselves?

Nothing is set in stone, and it's unlikely that the multi-generational farmers will give up their way of life without a fight. "Cannabis farmers are very good at improvising, and they're resilient people", Chris Anderson of Redwood Roots says. "We will always find a way, no matter what. That's who we are, that's what we are, and that's who we'll always be." ■

NANNETTE
HAMMOND

**How do you feel about shooting for Playboy?**
I am very excited about being in Playboy Australia! It's a beautiful country with beautiful people.

**Could you tell our readers something surprising about yourself?**
Hmmm, something surprising about me is, I am the Barbie Mom of Six. I am a sensual dynamo with enormous amounts of energy!

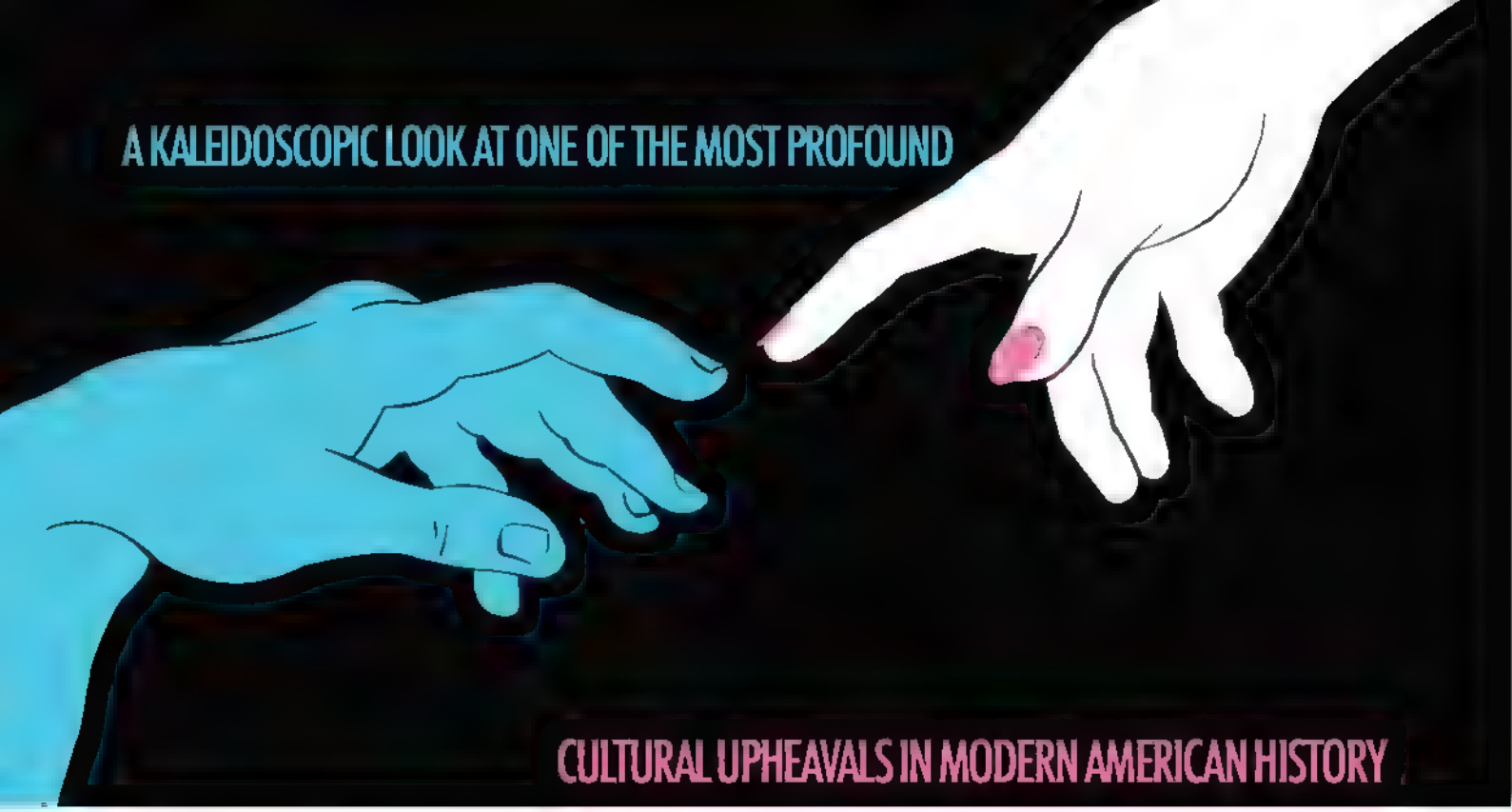
**What are some of your hobbies and interests?**
My hobbies include growing my Instagram Human Barbie Army around the globe with 74k to date!

**What turns you on?**
My biggest turn-ons are sexy smelling athletic men.

**What is your biggest turn-off?**
My biggest turn-offs are bad hygiene and rudeness. Any date that spoils me with attention, great food, and hot chemistry is hot, hot, hot!

**What has been your biggest challenge as a model so far?**
My biggest challenge as a model has been finding time to travel to exotic places topless!

**Any last words for our readers?**
My life motto – "Live a life others don't understand." Be you! And, give lots of love to your Playboy models!



A KALEIDOSCOPIC LOOK AT ONE OF THE MOST PROFOUND

CULTURAL UPHEAVALS IN MODERN AMERICAN HISTORY

# THE GENDER REVOLUTION

## Chief Creative Officer **Cooper Hefner** draws a line between sexism and sex while discussing the need for men to consciously evolve

Two weeks before Harvey Weinstein started dominating news cycles around the world, I authored an article for Playboy.com that explored the state of masculinity and manhood. In the piece, which you'll find on the following page, I insisted that men encourage one another to have challenging and long-overdue conversations about what it means to be a man and how we can continue to evolve into the best versions of ourselves — not just for one another but, equally important, for our female counterparts. My motivation: I had stepped into senior management at an organisation that has played a crucial role in defining what it means to be a man, as well as what it means to be a woman, in Western society. But as the women's movement evolves from #MeToo to Time's Up and beyond, the need for an unfiltered conversation about masculinity is more urgent than ever.

There's an important distinction to make, especially here in the pages of Playboy. When it comes to Harvey Weinstein and others like him, many people read headlines and jump to the dangerous conclusion that sex and men's desires are the problem, when in reality that is not the case for most. The gross abuse of power and the use of sex with self-serving objectives in mind are the issues at hand. The actions of Weinstein and many others in positions of power are simply immoral, but in order to have a conversation with the rational man — an individual who behaves with decency and respect, even if his sexual appetites are unique — it is important that a clear line is drawn between sexism and sex. In simplest terms, the line assists in clearly showing that the abuse of power is wrong, and when exploring Weinstein's situation, we find that sex was used as a weapon — one that kept consent out of the picture he was painting.

Although the world has changed since Playboy's inception, many in the United States and abroad still vilify sexual expression, especially when it's coming from a woman. We see heterosexual men own their sexuality unapologetically (if unconsciously, as I discuss in the piece to the right), while women struggle to achieve traditional career success and are also scrutinised for attempting to own their sexuality, or any other form of independence. The unequal status of women in the workplace and in society is directly connected to masculinity in more ways than men often acknowledge.

The domino effect following Weinstein's fall reminds us that the mistreatment of women and the abuse of power in social and professional situations have been an epidemic for far too long — one that many men have not recognised to its full extent, but that all of us have witnessed throughout our lives, whether we choose to admit it or not. Sadly, most women have not only seen this but have fallen victim to it in one sense or another.

It is my hope that the conversation continues between men and women and that offering a seat at the table to both sexes will help us participate in a needed moral awakening — one that guides us not to the vilification of sex, but to a moment when unjust behaviour toward women no longer exists.

*The*

# PLAYBOY PHILOSOPHY

## *Installment IV: Masculinity and Manhood*

Since the dawn of human consciousness we've explored what it means to be men much more than we've permitted our counterparts to explore what it means to be women. Historically in America, whether a woman was setting her sights on an executive role or simply had a desire to own her sexuality, she has been set up to fail based on a simple truth. Critics, both male and female, have a tendency to come out of the woodwork whenever women try to steer their own destiny.

Although times have undoubtedly changed over the past century, this fight continues today, with feminists and female influencers breaking barriers and continuing to define what it means to be a woman. Betty Friedan, Gloria Steinem and other leaders who guided the second-wave feminist movement seem more relevant now than ever before. Writers like Roxane Gay and political figures like Kamala Harris and Elizabeth Warren are just a few who are picking up the baton and continuing to fight for liberation and an equal playing field.

As women continue to define their personhood and drive their evolution, quiet and often unspoken murmurs from the other side plague the minds of men. At some point, our evolution as men, or at least the conversation and constructive debate around it, faltered. And so a few questions arise, ones without simple answers: What does it mean to be a man in America today? How does one healthily own his masculinity?

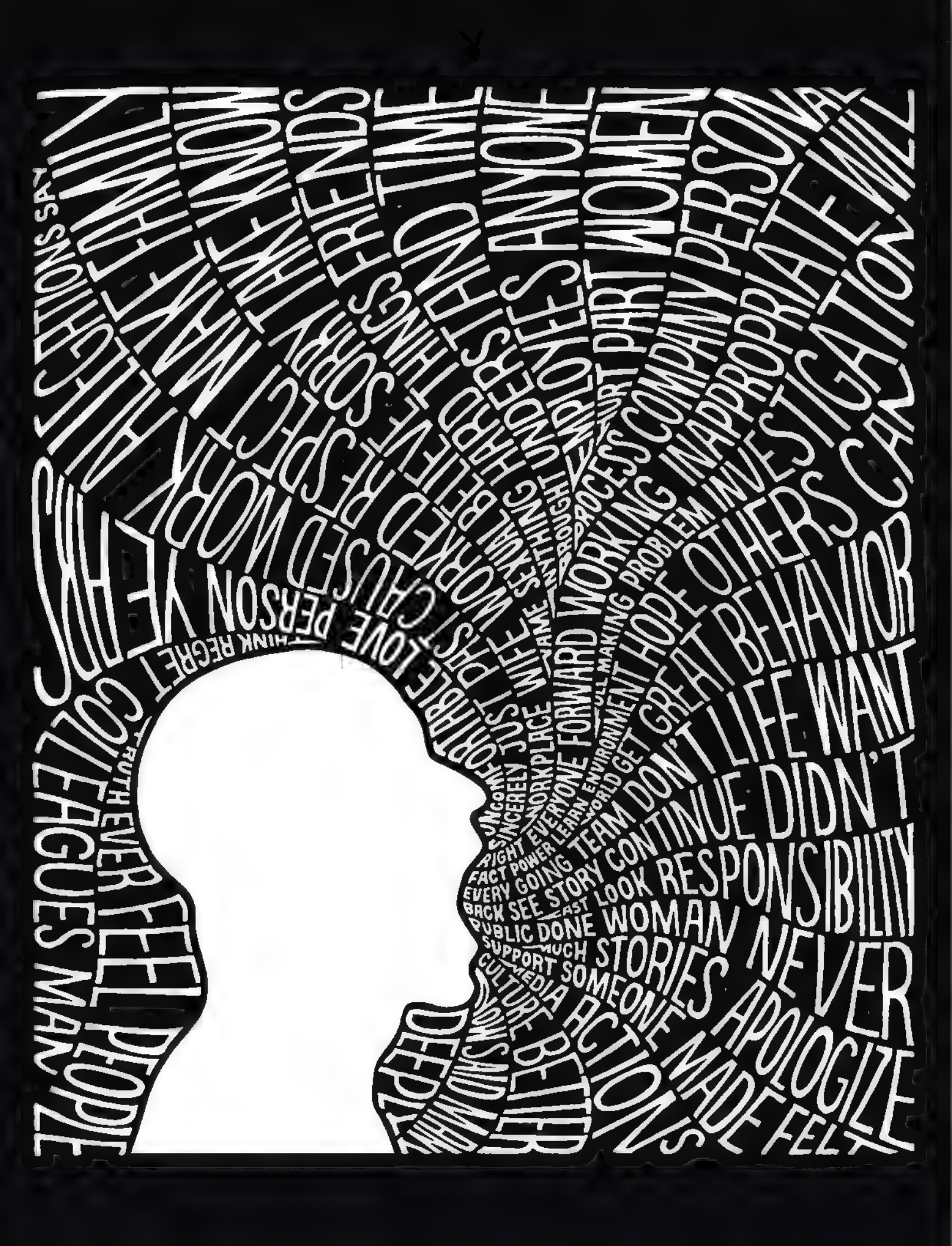
Polarizing figures have had a tendency to dictate how men view themselves. Throughout the second half of the 20th and early part of the 21st century, my father played a key role in this exploration. Today, we have new characters defining manhood, one of whom claims to "grab 'em by the pussy" and boasts that he can get away with it because of his celebrity. This individual is now the leader of the free world. When I think about past remarks, I find myself saddened to recall the reflections of a former U.S. president: "Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power." Abraham Lincoln's words not only suggest a method that provides a compass for good morals, they also outline the defining characteristics that make a good man. They stand true more than 150 years after his passing.

Today, men like Dan Bilzerian garner tens of millions of followers on social-media platforms by projecting a masculine lifestyle whose material excesses seem gratifying on the outside. While the overindulgence is fascinating for millions to watch, what really intrigues most of the boys and men following Bilzerian comes from a desire to answer the same questions: What does it mean to be a man in America today, and how does one healthily own his masculinity?

In some ways, Bilzerian's life mirrors that of my father—a man who chose to walk a particular path in the late 1990s and early 2000s, portraying certain qualities of manhood that Bilzerian and others follow without delving deeper. It is crucial to keep going, to explore how men define masculinity and how those definitions, and those people we've anointed as their representatives, define us.

Today, masculinity is often connected to violence, a quality I don't believe most men truly want to promote. Many men love to romanticize violence, yet very few if any actually enjoy its extremes. Sexuality also defines masculinity, but sexuality has always been labeled either healthy or deviant, depending on how its various forms were viewed by society at a given point in history. Sexuality should be presented in a way that promotes a level of respect for one's self and one's partners, while also accepting men who choose to live outside conventional boundaries that define gender roles. The world around us often says a gay man isn't "manly." This belief, which continues to plague American culture, has to do with our dated interpretation of masculinity. For those who fall on the extreme conservative side of the social-policy spectrum, Remind yourself that acceptance is not the same as encouragement.

We are long overdue for an era in which men give themselves the same permission to evolve manhood as women have given themselves to redefine womanhood. Failing to do so will allow the pussy grabbers to continue telling the country what it means to be a man—something none of us should be comfortable with as we continue walking toward our future. ■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# SORRY NOT SORRY

*Wading through the wave of men's apologies that continue to wash ashore in Weinstein's wake*

By **SLOANE CROSLEY**

When I was a kid, I used to steal from my sister on a regular basis. Cassette tapes, dirty novels, hair clips, Game Boy cartridges. Every time she caught me — which was most of the time, I have all the cat-burgling skills of a dog — I'd apologise. And every time, she'd issue the same clarification: "You're only sorry you got caught." Fair point. It's not like I felt guilty while I was pawing for bodice-rippers under her bed. I only felt inconvenienced upon discovering that my actions had consequences. But I did learn that not all apologies are equal. So much so that in 2015 I wrote an op-ed for *The New York Times* about why women should stop apologising for themselves so much. The piece went viral enough to land me on *CBS This Morning*, where I was interviewed by Charlie Rose, whose lack of interest in the subject no longer seems like a reflection of my ability to articulate it. You can see it in the clip. Every time the camera cuts to him, he's picking sleep out of his eye. I mean, he's really getting in there.

Now Rose, along with dozens of high-profile men including Matt Lauer, Al Franken and Louis CK, have been forced to apologize to the point that the famous man's mea culpa has become a burgeoning genre in itself — the Sexual Harasser's Lament. Why, there's even a "Watch the birdie!" sub-genre in which men like Mario "the Cinnamon Roll" Batali and Kevin "I'm Gay!" Spacey toss red herrings at the problem. But for the most part the blame deflection is more deeply seated. Rose views his time in the hot seat as a personal boot camp, stressing what he's "learned" and that "all of us… have come to a profound new respect for women and their lives". Who, us? I have long had the perfect blend of respect and disrespect for my own life. Lauer is "humbled" and "blessed", as though he's about to lift up a statuette and thank God. Like Rose, he has spun the personal pain and professional set wadingthrough the wave of men's apologies that continue to wash ashore in Weinstein's wake sorry not sorry backs of women into a teaching moment for himself. "The last two days have forced me to take a very hard look at my own troubling flaws", he mused. I have a full-time job taking a hard look at my troubling flaws, and I didn't have to touch anyone to get it. Louis CK's apology, perhaps the best intentioned, is nonetheless missing the magic word. Harvey Weinstein, who seems driven to be the best at everything, including being the worst, is in conversation less with his victims than with the NRA, to which he plans on devoting his "full attention".

Apologies, by their nature, are imperfect because they're delivered by people imperfect enough to warrant contrition. After centuries of apologising for being bumped into, women are highly trained — like Liam Neeson very particular-set-of-skills trained — in the art of the apology. But as bittersweet as the advantage we have in this department is, it's still astounding how men can be so piss-poor at it. The phrase *mea culpa* literally means "through my fault," meaning every grievous act passes through a single portal. There is no "I'm sorry you feel that way," which puts the onus on the victim, or "consider the context", which puts it on society, or "I have brought shame upon my family", which… I don't know what that is. We don't live in feudal Japan. A pure apology is one rooted in accountability for yourself and regret for others, not the other way around.

If I empathise with these men at all, I empathise with them as writers. I certainly wouldn't want this gig. No words are available to fix what's been done, and even the acknowledgement of that futility is grating. Plus, direct admission of a crime is legally inadvisable, which means the centre drops out of half these pronouncements before they begin. Still, the apologies come laced with the pompousness of the newly moral or with the brazen demand that we see their authors as wounded. Or else they blink at us with Bambi eyes, their tone reminiscent of a teenage shoplifter claiming not to know one has to pay for things in a store.

And yet, apologise they must! To have no comment is to tacitly admit their guilt or else expose their hope that if everyone stays very still, the storm will pass. It's hard not to sense these men's reliance on America's short-term memory. I don't blame them. But we do make exceptions. Ask Monica Lewinsky. We're in the midst of a vital and exciting uprising of women's voices and a long overdue shift in the power structure. But that's not why this moment has staying power. It's because once every handful of years, the same news story that graces the cover of *Us Weekly* also graces the front page of *The New York Times*. Which means it's easy to follow. If you haven't been keeping tabs on the Syrian civil war, it can feel prohibitively confusing to dive in now. But widespread sexual misconduct across every industry enables us to discuss a salacious topic at length, with authority and without guilt. It's locked in.

So to the men penning these public apologies. It's not that your words are falling on deaf ears. Oh, we're listening all right. But what is meant to extricate you from the mess you've created and distance you from the damage you've caused only feeds the beast. And that's good. It's a good beast. It's not out to get men or scare them into thinking they can't make a dirty joke or have a crush on a woman at work ever again. It's so much bigger than that. It's a beast that has come to realign the world for our children, who have to grow up in it. It has been taking shape for decades — centuries, depending on how you clock it. And as your apologies keep coming, they make a dull buzzing sound around the beast's ears. Like flies. Small. Manifold. Frantic. Irrelevant. ■

ILLUSTRATIONS BY **SARAH A. KING**

Kiera
Ribeiro
LUIS GOMEZ
Text by SAM

My exotic look comes from having both South American and European origins. I was born in Brazil and raised in Europe. Before modelling I worked as a realtor for a few years. I also have my personal trainer certification and I'm currently studying for the NASM exam so I can become a more knowledgeable and better trainer. I have graced several international Playboy and Maxim covers and shot for bikini- and fitness magazines as well. Besides modelling, I am doing real estate investing.

**About me**
I am a classy, intelligent, exotic bikini and glamour model and entrepreneur with a great sense of humour and a zest for life. I am sophisticated, well-travelled and adventurous. I like meeting new people and discovering new places.

**My hobbies and interests**
Working out, playing tennis, reading, scuba diving, travelling (I've travelled to 54 countries so far), shopping, going to the beach, pool parties, museums, theatre, fine-dining, boating, and hanging out with my friends.

**My goals and career ambitions**
I would like to become a successful fitness model in a few years and work with big brands. I would like to help lots of people get into better shape and become healthier. Also, I would like to open my small group training studio next year in South Florida.

**Who inspires me**
My mother inspires me the most. She is not only beautiful inside and out, but she's also very humble and hard working. She speaks five languages fluently and can cook amazingly well.

**My favourite quote**
"Look always toward the sunshine and shadows will fall behind you." – Walt Whitman

**Turn-on**
Generosity, politeness, great smell, tropical beaches.

**Turn-off**
Bad hygiene, disrespectful, stupidity, shallowness.

**The perfect date**
Having a romantic private beach dinner with my date and after dinner making love to him on the beach.

**My girl crush**
Jennifer Lopez and Sofia Vergara. Both women are very beautiful and have a great sense of humour and they're both very talented.

**My favourite food**
Seafood

**My biggest fear**
I am afraid of heights. I would never try bungee jumping or skydiving. But I feel very comfortable under the water and I like scuba diving.

**I'm not embarrassed to say**
That I am a perfectionist and I believe in constant self-improvement. I try to improve myself both physically and mentally each day.

**Want to see more of Kiera? Then follow her journey on Instagram at @playmatekieraribeiro and @kieraribeiro**

# SUBJECT, VERB, OBJECT

*A poet considers masculinity in America via a dark family memory*

By **GREGORY PARDLO**

For kicks, my father would leave my mother alone in a room with his male friends. The first time he did it, my mother thought he was being careless and told him that his friends had come on to her in his absence. The next time it happened she thought he was being naive, too trusting. She complained bitterly from then on, sensitive to every instance of abandonment. Time and again he found some reason to ghost on her. Years later, my father admitted that this was how he extracted proof that his friends envied him. As if to help her understand his motives, he said my mother was like a candy bowl he would leave in the room to taunt his friends, who knew the candy belonged exclusively to him. Any way I look at it, his analogy only compounds the horror it represents. My wife and I argue over this revelation in particular, one of several my mother has passed on to me like toxic heirlooms.

My wife called the candy-bowl excuse a lame distraction. "You can't compare a woman to a candy bowl", she said, "and expect her not to take offence". I agreed in part, but where my wife saw a sadistic man abusing his wife, I saw a guy trying to impress his homies. Maybe I was just arguing for a lesser charge. The way I saw it, my mother was incidental. To my father, she was an object to be acted upon. I conceded that my mother suffered a kind of symbolic violence in the process, but felt that it was unintentional. Insensitive, sure, but not mean-spirited. My wife insisted there was nothing symbolic about it. It was violence in fact. "If the thing he used as bait really didn't matter", my wife said, "your dad could have used an actual candy bowl and gotten the same results". It would have worked, I mumbled, if it had been an ounce of weed.

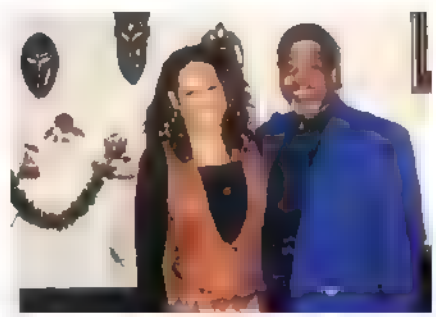
Until very recently I imagined there was a difference between predatory, destructive masculinity and the kind of "locker-room-talk" masculinity that men exercise mostly in the company of other men. I reasoned that the locker-room variety, the sort demonstrated by Donald Trump in the famous *Access Hollywood* tape, is flawed, but at least it isn't calculated to deliberately hurt anyone. Another case in point: that photo of Al Franken pretending to bonk a sleeping woman's breasts, the picture staged to grab the attention of other men. Not long ago, I would have said that it was another victimless offence — an immature or insecure guy clowning for his friends, that this type of behaviour promotes bonding and friendship among men. That's a view of masculinity I got from my dad, a view I'd been inclined to protect. But I think now of all the ways it can be harmful.

After my father died two years ago, my mother embarked on a kind of "truth and reconciliation" campaign. I doubt she was thinking about it so formally, but I'm sure she'd processed and bottled up her experiences over the years because she didn't trust confiding them to anyone while my dad was still around. Not many people, anyway, knew my father intimately enough to corroborate the subtle kinds of cruelty he could inflict on my mother. Most people would consider my dad's peccadilloes as victimless bad behaviour. His death made me - an educated, securely employed, property-owning husband and father - the closest thing our extended family had to the patriarchal standard to which masculinity attunes in America, so perhaps my mother thought I would be independent enough in my thinking to receive her stories about my father objectively. Getting stuff off her chest may have been cathartic for my mom, but her stories felt like a list of charges against me.

I had convinced myself that the candy bowl incident was harmless because it was a social interaction among men. Sociologist Michael Kimmel has noted how "men prove their manhood in the eyes of other men." To argue, however, that my mother was an object caught in the crossfire between men negotiating their masculinity may only prove that masculinity is dehumanising to anyone who is not a man. I think of Donald Trump's famously enigmatic boast/confession, "I moved on her like a b!tch". He's not saying he had such a good time with this woman that he continues to feel waves of contentment. No, *I moved on her like a b!tch* describes the way he acted upon the incidental woman. Whether or not women and children are treated as objects, as long as masculinity is active, men will need something to act upon. To be domineering, we need people to dominate.

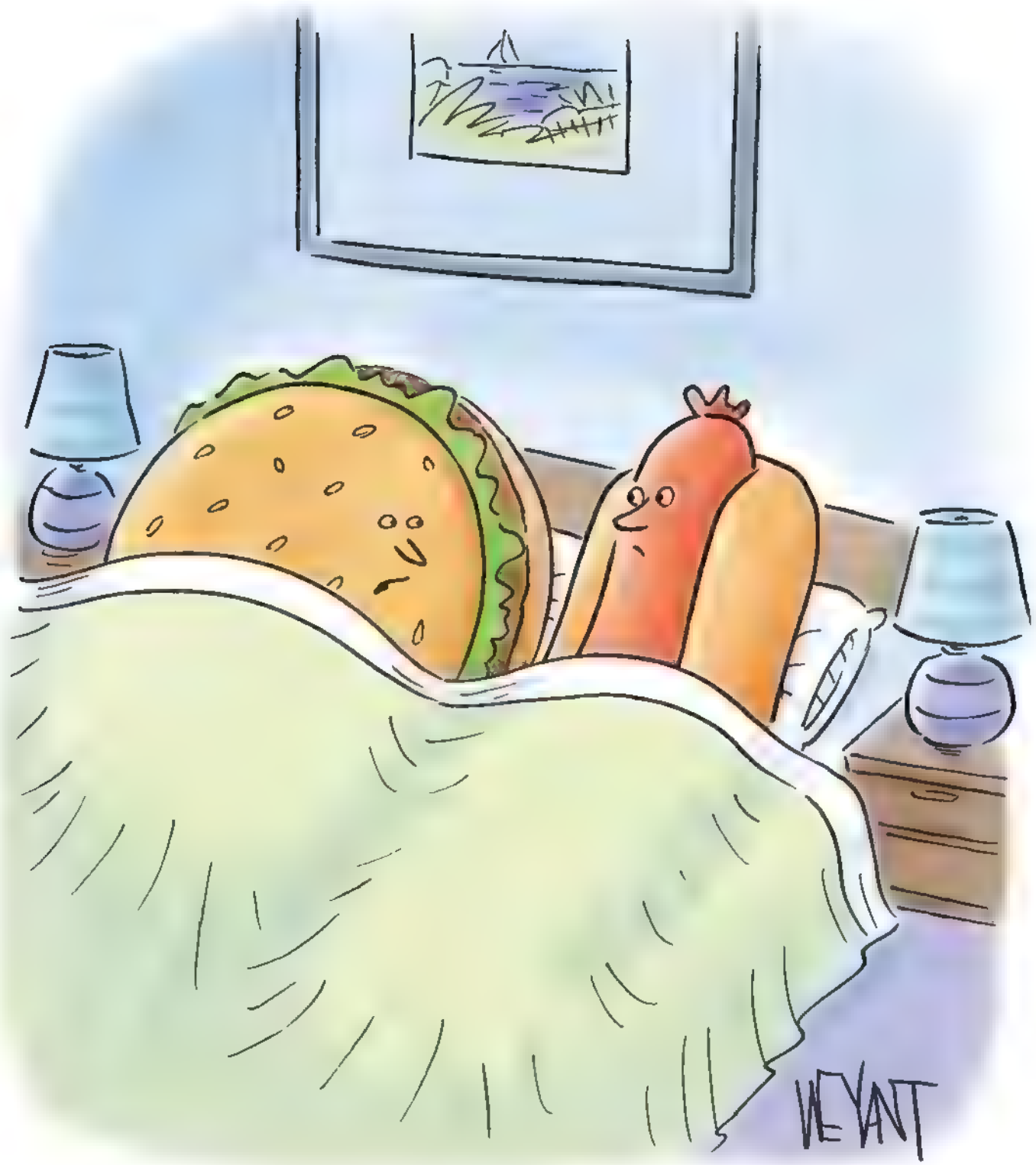
"Domineering" is practically in the job description of an American patriarch. My dad was good at his job. From where I was standing my mom seemed to have figured out how to navigate his antics. Because she concealed her distress, I assumed she didn't suffer. I assumed my father's masculinity was victimless. And I thought being a husband and a dad required some degree of despotism.

"Do as I say and not as I do", my father (below, with my mother) liked to tell me, which presented a problem as I grew into my own manhood. By depriving me of action, however symbolically, he moved on me — in a manner of sspeaking -



like a b!tch. Naturally, I responded in kind and produced a family drama that took no account of my mother's pain. Even still, I catch myself sometimes performing my dad's swaggering dominance with my own wife and kids. I agree with Kimmel that masculinity is situational, something experienced and expressed in relation to others, because I too need a masculinity check now and then. Knowing how this works, I look for healthy ways to get my mojo out in the open where I can relish it. I play tennis. Instead of dominating people, I dominate the court. Alas, this so far is all the generational progress I've made.

I'm end-running my mother's #MeToo revelations so my masculinity can continue functioning like a verb and thrive in the context of other men. The obvious lesson I take is that human beings should not be the object of my actions. The challenge now is to envision a kind of masculinity that is accountable to women as well. ■


WEYANT

# JESSE PLEMONS

*From Breaking Bad to Black Mirror, he has starred in at least one of your favourite shows. And in the new dark comedy film Game Night, the towheaded Texan once again marries creepiness and charisma*

By **STEPHIE GROB PLANTE** *Photography by* **HARPER SMITH**

**Q1:** *A lot of the characters you've played are innocent-looking guys who turn out to be sociopaths. What is it that attracts you to those roles?*

**PLEMONS:** I'm drawn to characters who aren't quite what they seem, because that feels more authentic to me than someone you look at, immediately size up and feel you know what category to put them in. I don't think people are really like that. And it's more fun to connect the dots and try to figure them out yourself.

**Q2:** *Your Breaking Bad character, Todd, is arguably one of the most evil characters on the show. Do you relate on any level?*

**PLEMONS:** Yeah. I mean, that's the only way you can give a somewhat honest performance. It's substituting and playing little mental and emotional tricks on yourself, but you have to do your best not to judge the character you're playing. That happened once: I realised, wow, I don't like this person at all. I'm not going to say which character it was, but it was a real person, and it was shocking. And then it's a different experience when you watch it. Hopefully it didn't affect the performance.

**Q3:** *Do you feel you have to like at least part of a character in order to play him truthfully?*

**PLEMONS:** You kind of have to love your characters in some way. You have to attempt to understand why they're doing what they're doing. It's got to make sense to you.

**Q4:** *So if Todd hadn't been born into a family of white supremacists, do you think he might have had a chance as a decent human?*

**PLEMONS:** I think so. One of the episodes of Breaking Bad that stands out for me is the one with Aaron Paul's character at some tweakers' house, and there's a little redheaded kid. Remember the episode with the ATM machine? I think there's something akin to that little kid in Todd, because there's something childlike about him. There are true monsters out there that were always destined to be monsters, but most times there's a reason.

**Q5:** *Is it safe to say that a lot of your work is hard for your parents to watch?*

**PLEMONS:** Most recently, after they saw *Black Mirror*, my dad kept saying, "That look in your eyes. That look in your eyes as that captain..." That's all he could say. And obviously they hate it when my character dies. *Breaking Bad* was such a long time ago, but I think that one was probably strange for them to watch.

**Q6:** *Have any of the parts you've been offered given you pause?*

**PLEMONS:** Two come to mind. Pennywise — I got that call and just didn't want to go there. I didn't care what the scenario was, really, I just... no. And then there was a part in this movie *Suburbicon* as one of the bad >>

guys who try to kill the kid. I was like, "I can't kill another kid right now". [*laughs*]

**Q7:** *Well, speaking of kids, you've been acting for pretty much your entire life. What was the movie or TV show you saw as a kid that made you say, "I want to do that"?*

**PLEMONS:** I watched *Lonesome Dove* before I could talk. I was drawn to it as a toddler, having very little understanding of what was going on. But as I got older and started acting, I realised how good Robert Duvall, Tommy Lee Jones and Chris Cooper are. It's so honest and authentic. And it's a great book on top of that. I love Larry McMurtry. My father and his side of the family are all cowboys. I grew up riding and roping, so being in that world was pretty easy to imagine.

**Q8:** *And you found out you're a descendant of Stephen F Austin, the so-called Father of Texas.*

**PLEMONS:** Yeah; I feel like my dad knew that throughout my childhood. Then my mom started doing Ancestry.com, and my dad all of a sudden snapped to and was like, "Oh, wait a second". He had a book on the piano that directly ties us to Moses Austin, Stephen Austin's father. Why would you wait until now to give us this piece of information? [*laughs*] Thanks, Dad.

**Q9:** *Did your Hollywood career as a kid give you any street cred with your classmates back in Mart, Texas, and did it affect your first forays into dating?*

**PLEMONS:** Well, I didn't get Friday Night Lights until after I graduated. What I mainly remember are the trips when I would go out to Los Angeles and not get a job, and all my friends would be like, "Oh, what movies did you do?" Plural, like I did two or three movies in a couple of months. I was like, "Well, I auditioned for several things". As far as dating, I was never in either place long enough. It felt like I was perpetually playing catch-up. And I'm from such a small town: There were 40-something people in my graduating class. It was a very small pool.

**Q10:** *Is Mart anything like the Dillon, Texas of Friday Night Lights?*

**PLEMONS:** It's very similar to Dillon, just much smaller. One stoplight. Aside from the size, Dillon was pretty much the world I grew up in. On Friday nights, don't count on going anywhere in town, because no one's there. And even down to the old guys watching the junior varsity games so they know which players are coming up.

**Q11:** *On Fargo you play possibly the world's most dedicated husband, opposite your now fiancée, Kirsten Dunst. What did you learn about devotion and marriage from Ed?*

**PLEMONS:** When I met with Noah Hawley for the first time, I needed to make sure Ed wasn't just a doormat — that there was some real love there. There was a line in the script that likened Ed to a cow. I asked Noah, "Is he not very intelligent or what?" He said, "No, his true nature is not inherently aggressive or violent. He's someone who wants to graze and be happy, basically". I started thinking about different people who have that unflinching devotion, and my dad is one of those people. Once you're in, you're in, no questions asked. It doesn't matter what you did, you call him, he'll be there and he'll figure it out. There was something I immediately understood about that. So that was a very weird love letter to my dad.

**Q12:** *The cow motif is also apt considering the fact that Ed uses a meat grinder to dispose of a corpse. Pivoting off that, who or what scares you?*

**PLEMONS:** Well, not to get political, but the first thing that comes to mind is the US President. He scares me. And, I don't know what you'd call it… online outrage. It's intense. It's not that new, but in the past however many years there has become this need to find someone to vent all your frustration and rage and anger to — and it happens daily. That's pretty scary to me.

**Q13:** *You're not on social media. Was that a conscious decision?*

**PLEMONS:** Not really. I signed up for Facebook when I was 18, when I first moved to Austin and started Friday Night Lights. I remember spending an hour and a half on it once. You get into this hole, and then you snap out of it, like, What just happened? Where did that hour and a half go? I realised I didn't want to spend my time online. Maybe I recognised that there's something enticing about it. In terms of Twitter and Instagram and everything, I would rather be where I am and read the news — which is now coming from Twitter. But yeah, I'm not built for it.

**Q14:** *Black Mirror digs into a lot of techno anxieties. What are yours?*

**PLEMONS:** I guess the feeling that we're moving further away from basic human connection, and the false portrayal of yourself that happens online. It's nothing that hasn't been said before, but that is scary to me, thinking about kids growing up counting likes and everything. It's definitely going to alter their perception and experience of the world.

**Q15:** *Your episode of Black Mirror couldn't have been timed better, with the #MeToo movement and your character's toxic masculinity. Basically, you play a butt-hurt gamer who imports his co-workers into a Star Trek-like game and abuses them. How did you do research for the part?*

**PLEMONS:** I watched a lot of documentaries about gamers and video game programmers and that sort of thing. I was more interested in that kind of isolation and that need to escape reality. I think there are a lot of people — and they don't have to be Trekkies or gamers or whatever — who understand that. I felt strange finishing work some days because I knew Cristin Milioti had to go to some dark places. But I wasn't looking at the bigger picture, because I didn't want to come in with any judgements. The character is not a good person, but there's a reason he became that, and that's what I was trying to figure out.

**Q16:** *Let's talk Game Night, which follows three couples at a murder-mystery party that goes way off the rails. Are you into games? Do you get competitive?*

**PLEMONS:** Yeah, definitely. Some good, clean fun. I love playing poker. Recently this HQ game

**THERE ARE TRUE MONSTERS OUT THERE THAT WERE ALWAYS DESTINED TO BE MONSTERS, BUT MOST TIMES THERE'S A REASON.**

have you done that? It's an app where, like, hundreds of thousands of people get on live, and it's trivia. I'm not very good at it, but I enjoy it

**Q17:** Game Night seems like it was a fun set. How much was improvised?

**PLEMONS:** There was a decent amount, but the script was so funny to begin with. There were little moments here and there, but it was probably 85 percent scripted. I was shooting Black Mirror when I got the script. I got to my first scene and was like, "Yeah, I want to play Gary, the creepy cop neighbour". Having the freedom to experiment and play around with a scene is something I really enjoy. Everything isn't so chiselled out, where you feel you know how it's going to go or should go; it's not great when you're in that place. I think that's one of the reasons Friday Night Lights worked. Everyone tested the waters in the first few episodes, and then it became a game to see who you could crack up.

**Q18:** *What would you be doing if you weren't an actor?*

**PLEMONS:** Something possibly in psychology or... English literature. Those are probably majors I would've chosen. I don't know. I love writing songs and playing music. I don't play out too much anymore, but I did when I was living in Austin for Friday Night Lights. It was kind of accidental. We would have all these great house parties where musicians would come over and play. I wrote a song, and everyone was like, "You guys should start a band". We were called Cowboy and Indian, which wasn't the best name. We played a lot, probably from 2012 to 2014. And I loved it. Now it's been such a long time. I'm more interested in recording. I've got a lot of friends who are making such great music, and I'm like, "Ah, let me in there". I enjoyed it, but it would probably take me a little while to warm up again.

**Q19:** *Who are your go-to artists to play when you're at home, messing around on your guitar?*

**PLEMONS:** I grew up listening to what everyone listened to in Mart: popular country radio stations. I always go back to John Prine. I love his songwriting. And the Stones if I want to kick it up a little bit. When I moved to Austin I discovered Townes Van Zandt, and that was a pivotal moment. Learning about him changed the way I look at music, and even at movies — just the devotion he had to songwriting. He was obviously tortured, but he reworked what I thought you could accomplish.

**Q20:** *You turn 30 this year. How are you feeling about it? Is it scary? Is it a relief?*

**PLEMONS:** I feel like I should be 30. I guess when I was younger I always felt older than my age. Thirty feels right, you know? I haven't given it too much thought. Now I'll be thinking about it. ■

# KILLING TOWN

# BY MICKEY SPILLANE & MAX ALLAN COLLINS

*Dames, dirty cops and one down-and-out dick: Private detective Mike Hammer is back in his first-ever adventure — lost, found and excerpted here exclusively*

The blonde dame in the sleeper-car window was damn near naked in front of the mirror on the back of her closed door, and ready to finish the job. She hadn't bothered to pull down the shade, maybe because her train was in the yards backed up on a curve of track against a stalled freight

And she didn't know she had company, by way of somebody catching a ride under that freight

I didn't catch what she was changing out of — she was stark naked soon enough, and not a natural blonde, but nobody's perfect Right now she was climbing into some black lacy stuff, several pieces of it, including the sheer black nylons she was hooking to the garter belt, shapely right leg lifted with the toes stretching out. Then she stood there pirouetting around while she brushed out her hair, making love to her reflection but good.

For once I wasn't in the mood to enjoy a candid strip act, and anyway I was no Peeping Tom — just a tagalong passenger working the cricks out of a back stiff from accommodations under the boxcar, aching all over from where sharp-edged pebbles had bounced off. A hunk of baling wire between the tracks had caught and ripped my pants leg, and the fabric flapped around until I got into my battered overnight case and found a safety pin to clip the tears together. At least the gash wasn't in me

And maybe, doing that, I caught a few more glimpses of the babe in the window. Just maybe.

There was dirt caked in the stubble of my beard and ground into my scalp My hands and face must have been as black as the night itself, its sultry heat sending rivulets of sweat down that turned it into pure muck. Travel under a train does not come with shower facilities. My preening beauty wouldn't have found much to look at where I was concerned.

Somebody else would find me worth looking at, though Down the line I could hear the yard cops flushing out the bums, nightsticks making dull, soggy noises where they landed. Sometimes sharper, cracking sounds were followed by hoarse screams and a torrent of curses, mixed in with the rumbles and bangs and whines of trains moving and braking and bumping.

Then they were closing in from both ends and I was ready to kick in the chops the first guy who stuck his face in between the cars where I was standing For a minute there was a lull and I was just about to make a break for it when the beam of a flash split the night in half and light bounced off from somewhere, catching brass buttons not 20 feet away.

The big tough bull in blue looked like he was frozen there, staring straight at me

I pressed back into the shadows, trying to hug the rear of the car. I was jammed up against the steel ladder that ran to the top, wishing I could get the overnight case in my hand turned around so it wouldn't make such a conspicuous bulge. Same went for the packet tucked in the front of my shirt under my old field jacket

Damn it to hell — *he was waiting for me to come out so he could get a clear swing at me!* It hadn't taken me long to regret leaving my 45 behind

Behind me I could half sense the dame >>

snuggling into her undies, but I would have liked it better if she had switched out the light. It was turning me into a silhouette that couldn't be missed unless that guy had left some thick glasses at home.

I was all set to pitch out that bag in the railroad cop's kisser, to take some teeth and make a break for it, when I realised the copper wasn't in the same mood as me — not by a long shot. More lights came by, hitting his face, and this time I saw his eyes. No, they weren't looking at me at all. They went right by me to the dame in the sleeper-car window and I could have lit a butt without him seeing the match. Could have started blowing smoke rings too.

What the hell? The curve of track gave me a vantage point, so I took one last look at her myself.

She was working on the other nylon now, toes stretched out ballet style, and then her feet found the floor and she had a look at herself too, probably thinking Gypsy Rose Lee had nothing on her. Her red-nailed hands cupped this and that, and her chin lifted, her mouth all white teeth and crimson lipstick and pure confidence. She was having a hell of a good time in front of that mirror. Hell of a good time.

But I needed to get out of there while the railroad officer was still getting his fill.

I slid off into the alley between the freight and the sleeper, ducked under the light and walked to the end of the string of cars. I didn't have a bit of trouble after that. Just strolled out of the yards into the passenger station, cleaned up in the restroom, dumping the torn trousers and glad I'd brought a few changes along.

Then I went down a dingy, ill-lit, worse-smelling street to a sloppy hash house crowded with a section gang going on late shift. I ate at the counter and a cute waitress with black streaks in her blonde hair and pretty green eyes flirted with me as she took my order for bacon and eggs. She was 20 going on 40.

"You just roll into town, mister?"

She didn't know how right she was.

"Yeah. What do I need to know about this burg?"

"Killington? More like Killing Town. It'll kill your dreams deader than a mackerel. And does this burg know about dead mackerels!"

Her joke missed me, but I gave her a grin anyway.

She went over to the kitchen window. She had a nice shape and when she stepped on her tiptoes to shout the order in, her fanny said hello. Five minutes later she was back with my food and a refill of my coffee.

"Where you from?" she asked.

"New York."

"The big town! Man, would I like to get there sometime."

"Not that far away, sugar."

"A world away from here."

I threw down the plate of bacon and eggs, left her a quarter tip, then went out and roamed around until I found a hotel one step up from a flophouse.

The bleary-eyed night clerk, looking 40 and probably not 30, was smoking a cigarette that didn't have tobacco in it. His shirt had been white once and his bow tie was half off, hanging like a carelessly picked scab. He shoved the register at me without really looking. I wrote *Hammer, Mike* and passed over my buck. For that I got a key to a closet masquerading as a room, where I dumped my bag before I came downstairs again.

When the clerk saw me, he did his best to place me, then made me as his new arrival and reluctantly let go of the smoke he was holding in his lungs, also letting out a few words.

"Want a whore?"

Full service, this place.

I said no thanks and pitched my key on the desk.

Some town, Killington.

Two doors down from the hotel through the rank-smelling night waited a cellar bar that hadn't done anything to itself since Prohibition except get a licence. The walls were bare brick with only a couple inches of clearance over my head. An old scarred mahogany bar ran along one side, while a few tables were spaced around the rest of the room, wearing so many scratches they at first seemed covered with patterned cloths.

A pair of sharp articles played blackjack at one table, two frowsy, blowsy women with shrill voices and ugly print dresses had another,

and over in the corner a kid about 20 sat at one, having a quiet argument with his girl Neither of them belonged in the place They had good manners and good clothes, and from the flush on the girl's face and the excitement that showed in her eyes, it was a slumming party with the skirt doing the picking

Probably this was her way of telling her boyfriend she was up for anything get it? *Anything*. Psychology, it's called.

Over the bar was a clock that said it was a quarter after one. Two and a half hours since the naked babe on the train. In the upper corner of the mirror over the back bar was a bullet hole spiderwebbed with cracks Place had character, all right

I sat there and filled up on beer. I was dry right down to my shoes from the trip upstate on the rods, and until I had three brews under my belt, I didn't get anything but wet But don't let anybody tell you that you can't get drunk on beer. On six I was mellow and one later I was there

The street door opened and let in some more of the humid night. For a minute the brunette just looked the place over, her almond-shaped brown eyes taking everything in, her full mouth wearing lipstick so red it was almost black. She nearly changed her mind about coming in, then shrugged and walked over on her black high-heeled strappy pumps to the bar

It wasn't exactly a walk there should have been an orchestra, a stage and wings for her to come out of She was nicely stacked, shades of blue-and-pink jersey dress clinging as if she were facing a headwind All that brown hair bounced off her shoulders while she held her stomach in to keep her breasts high and breathed through a faint smile that might have been real if it weren't so damned professional.

Sure, she picked me. Maybe she could sense class when she saw it. Or maybe she liked the colour of my dough on the bar. The other two drunks were showing nickels and dimes while I sported change of a 20

The greasy, glassy-eyed bartender, two parts pockmark and one part skimpy moustache, swabbed down the bar in front of her with a wet rag, looking like he could use a swabbing himself. "What'll it be, honey?" he gruffed

Her eyes passed over the scotch bottles, but she said tiredly, "Whisky and ginger".

I kicked a buck forward. "Make it scotch. Best you got. Soda on the side "

Hell, why waste time.

The brunette raised her eyebrows and smiled at me "Well thank you You know, I don't usually .. "

"Skip it, sis," I said. "I was already in the mood for company." I finished my current beer, watching her over the rim of the glass.

She shrugged and the smile looked a little tired too "Does it show on me that much?"

I put the glass down and let the bartender fill it up again. "Not really," I lied.

"Couldn't I just be some lonely girl looking for a nice guy?"

"Maybe, but you didn't find one." I shrugged

"You look just fine, I'm just used to spotting the symptoms."

Her sigh was abrupt and so were the words that followed: "Someday I'm going to get out of this town and get a real job."

"What's the matter with the one you got?" If I had been leering, she would have given me the glass of booze right in the face. But I wasn't leering, so she studied me curiously a moment. "Don't see a ring. You married?"

"Nope."

"Got any kids?"

I grinned. "Not that I know of."

She swirled the ice around in her glass. "Want to hear something funny?"

"Sure "

She looked in the mirror behind the bar, past her reflection. "I want both A ring and kids. Together and legitimately "

"So what are you doing about it?"

Her shoulders made that resigned motion again. "Not much. Anyway, men like nice girls, don't they?"

"Like women like nice guys? That one was started by an old maid who died a virgin. You can have your nice girls. They're all a pack of phonies."

**"WOMEN LIKE NICE GUYS? THAT ONE WAS STARTED BY AN OLD MAID WHO DIED A VIRGIN."**

The sleepy, one-hiked-eyebrow glance she gave me was deliberately sarcastic. "Really?"

"I mean it," I said. "They're phonies because they're all liars. Everyone wants the same things and the good girls are afraid to go after it."

"Which is what?"

"Sex. Money. Not necessarily in that order.

So they think up lies to excuse themselves, get loaded down with frustrations that turn into inhibitions and when they finally do get married and give it up? The first thing you know the Holy Union is on the rocks."

"That right?"

"That's right. Hell, give me a dame that knows her way around every time When *they* settle down, they're *really* settled and know how to treat a guy. Like I said, the nice girls you can have."

"Thanks." Her eyes were laughing at me I ordered her another drink. "You go to college or something?"

"A few semesters in the Pacific."

The door opened again and foul muggy air and a sallow-faced kid in work clothes came in. He wandered to the cigarette machine, put a quarter in and pulled out his butts. He stood there fiddling with the pack until the bartender yelled, *"Hey!* Close that damn door!"

The kid said something dirty, finished opening the pack, lit a butt and walked out, leaving the bartender to go over and shut the damn door himself

I said, "What's that smell?"

I'd noticed it before, but now it seemed worse than ever

"Fish", she said, like she was tasting some that had gone off "Tons of it

Also clams, crabs and anything else that comes out of the ocean, all getting chopped, cooked and canned."

I shook my head. "Fish my eye. If it is, that catch's been dead a long time "

She shook her head and the brunette hair bounced on her shoulders some more. "No, it's fish, all right. Until the war, it wasn't bad at all. But the factory took a contract to turn out glue and put up the new addition where they make it, and *that's* what smells. Fish glue." She shuddered. "They say it makes more money than the cannery"

"Oh."

And so now I knew all about fish glue. Just plain glue, and the horses they made it from, wasn't bad enough. Now they made it out of fishes Dead mackerels.

"I heard better fish stories", I said. >>

She shrugged. "It's the biggest industry in town. Senator Charles owns it." She took a long pull on the drink and set the glass down empty. "I used to work there, y'know. At the cannery. I had a pretty good job too." Her hand made a wave at the room and herself. "That was before ... this."

"What happened?"

"My boss had busy hands. I slapped him."

I grinned. "With a fish, I hope."

She grinned. "No. I had to make do with an ashtray."

"Well played", I said.

Another shrug, too small to make her hair dance. "One way to get fired."

The door opened again and more of the smell seeped in. Only this time it closed and stayed closed after a wide, dish-faced blue-un formed cop with a big belly held it open for a younger partner to come down the three steps from the street. They both looked around the room. You'd think there was something to see.

Everything got quiet awfully fast and one of the drunks at the bar turned around and lost his balance. He went flat on his face and the big cop stepped over him, barely noticing. The slick pair at the card table stopped playing and stared. *Were these two after them?*

I stared too because the big cop wasn't looking at the blackjack-playing pair but instead right at me, and the way he held that club meant he aimed to use it before asking any questions. He played it tough, the way nearly every stupid cop does, thinking that a uniform made him a superman and forgetting that other guys are just as big and maybe even tougher. With or without a billy.

He reached for me with one hand to hold on while he swung and as soon as he had his fingers planted in my coat front, I pulled a nasty little trick that broke his arm above the elbow and he dropped to the floor screaming. The other cop was pulling his gun as he ran for me.

This one was stupid too. If I had gone the other way he would have had time to jerk the rod free, but I came in on him and split his face six ways to Sunday with a straight right, and while he lay there, I put a foot on his belly and brought it down hard. Like I was stomping on a particularly ugly bug.

He turned blue for a while, then started breathing again.

The cop with the broken wing had fainted.

The bartender was wide-eyed over his open mouth.

Over in the corner, the slumming party looked sick to their stomachs, then got up and scrambled out.

The brunette hadn't reacted at all.

I said to the barkeep, "I'd like to know how goons like this pair got on the force".

There was a wheeze in the bartender's throat when he told me. "For three hunnert bucks, you get put on the list." His eyes still seemed a little glassy. He looked at me, the phone on the wall, then toward the door, wondering what to do next.

"I don't know what the hell this is all about", I said, "but I don't like to get pushed. Not even a little bit".

**MY HEART WAS SLAMMING INTO MY RIBS AND MY MIND WAS TELLING ME TO GET THE HELL OUT.**

He swallowed and nodded. No argument.

One of the drunks decided it was time for another drink and pounded on the bar to get it. I raked in my change, stuck the bills in my wallet and put the silver in my pocket.

The brunette smiled wistfully. "Another time, another place?"

"A better time", I said, "a better place".

I pulled out a 10 and shoved it over to her. "Till then", I said. "Sorry to drink and run."

"Good luck", she said and smiled. She meant it too.

I had to step over the big-belly cop with the busted arm. I opened the door and stood sniffing the air. It stunk. Everything stunk about this burg.

But it went right with how I was feeling, so I didn't give a damn. I went up the few steps to the street, saw the empty squad car at the kerb and got too damned cocky for my own good. Cops drive in pairs and I didn't expect any others hanging around.

But they were ... they sure were.

Somebody yelled, "Cripes, there he goes!"

That was all I needed. I faded into the shadows alongside the building and took off as fast as I could. I skirted around the stone stoops, hurdled the boxes of rubbish packed against the railings and kept my head down all the way. The night started to scream with staccato blasts of gunfire while ricochets whistled off the pavement around me.

A slug tore into my shoe and knocked my foot out from under me. I hit the sidewalk on my tail, swearing my head off, wishing I had a rod in my hand that would tear the guts out of somebody ... any "three-hunnert-dollar" cop would do.

Up ahead a streetlight doused the area and I knew if I went into that yellow splash of light I'd be a dead duck. I couldn't go forward and I couldn't go back. I couldn't do a single damn thing except roll down the steps next to me until I hit a pile of newspapers and split them over on top of me.

I didn't get it. I didn't get it at all. I lay there with my lungs sucking air hungrily to stop the burning in my chest. *I come in undercover and suddenly I'm the main attraction.* My heart was slamming into my ribs and my mind was telling me to get the hell out of there in a goddamn hurry.

*Sure, get out. Walk right up into a face full of bullets.*

They were up there knowing right where I went and I could hear their feet converging on the spot. I pulled out the manila packet of green from under my coat, under my shirt, and tucked it in a gaping crack in the cement between the wall and the first step of the staircase that ran over my head. Tucked it in good and hoped for the best, filling in with some pebbles. That left me with my wallet and a few bucks.

*But I sure as hell didn't want to be found with that packet of green on me. The $30 000 that brought me to Killington would wind up in the pockets of the bent cops who busted me.*

Then I waited.

The door beside me that led to the cellar was too heavy to crash and the padlock too big to force. Go up and I'd die. Wait it out and maybe I wouldn't. So I stopped thinking and just waited.

A voice said, "*You down there!* Come out with your hands in the air!"

"Why should I?"

"Would you sooner do it in a basket?"

I went up.

*From Killing Town by Mickey Spillane and Max Allan Collins, out April 17 from Titan Books*

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# CASSIE CLAYTON

Photography by DAVID FILLION Text by SAMANTHA JACK

**Were you excited to shoot for Playboy?**
I was beyond excited to be featured in Playboy! It was always my dream and it finally came true!

**Tell us something surprising about you?**
I am currently finishing my 7th year of post-secondary and I had my thyroid removed when I was 17 years old

**Describe yourself in one sentence**
Always classy, never trashy

**What are some of your hobbies?**
Cooking, dancing, singing, and working out

**What is your biggest turn-on?**
Someone who is honest and motivated

**What turns you off the most?**
Someone who doesn't take care of themselves and dishonesty

**Describe your perfect date**
Somepace where I can simply lounge around with the one I'm with, drinking wine, and talking about everything till the sun comes up

**What would you consider to be your biggest challenge as a model so far?**
The push to pose nude

**Any last words you would like to share with our readers?**
Thank you for all the love and support over the years! I would not be where I am today without you. Thank you all so much Don't stop believing

# HELP WANTED

*How a growing network of men's support groups is pushing back against the tide of toxic masculinity*

By **SLOANE CROSLEY**

I turn in to the parking lot shortly before 7pm, though I'm still not sure this is the place. It's been dark for hours and the air is crisp for a December night outside Los Angeles. Finally a text comes through: "Where are you?" That's when I spot them: nine men alone in a public park, standing in a circle.

This may not be Fight Club, but there are definitely rules. First things first: Don't call them "guys". These are not dudes, homeboys or someone's brother from another mother. They're men. The second rule of not Fight Club: Whatever happens in the park stays in the park. Participants may share lessons learned here with friends outside the circle, but any personal secrets the team members reveal tonight must remain confidential.

Right, team. That's the third rule. "There is a negative connotation to the term *support group*", says Jason (who asked me not to use his real name). "A support group is a bunch of men making each other feel better. We don't do that. We believe life is better lived as a team sport. We're here to help you do everything you say you want to do." Perhaps he's splitting (receding) hairs, but over the next three hours I'll witness grown men confronting some of their ugliest fears and worst memories. Some will cry. One will reveal a personal secret so dark it feels like an episode of HBO's *Room 104*.

But first, some context.

These guys — sorry, *men* — are members of MDI, a non-profit organisation whose stated mission is "to cause greatness by mentoring men to live with excellence and, as mature masculine leaders, create successful families, careers and communities". The credo may be clunky, but the underlying message apparently resonates. MDI (which stands for "Mentor, Discover, Inspire") claims more than 1000 members across North America, with 101 teams concentrated in major cities including Seattle, San Francisco, Toronto and New York. The organisation was founded in the late 1990s, but its mission feels right on time, as we continue to learn that many of our heroes (and Matt Lauer) have been taking their dicks out at work.

MDI's teams host philanthropic events and participate in the occasional overnight retreat, but the weekly team meetings are the organisation's raison d'être. Support groups for men to (*gulp*) talk about their feelings certainly aren't new. Meetup.com, an online platform for finding people with similar interests, lists 360 groups in the United States dedicated to men's support, according to a company spokesperson. That number doesn't include groups such as City Dads that offer camaraderie for men but don't label themselves specifically as support groups. Other organisations where men can hug it out include the ManKind Project, a non-profit founded in 1984 that claims more than 900 groups across 22 countries. (MDI and groups like it, with their focus on personal growth and respect for all, are a world apart from the so-called men's rights outfits that frequently spout misogyny and often fall on the alt-right end of the spectrum.)

Despite a proliferation of available options, men remain unlikely to seek help. Last February, *Psychology Today* reported on the "silent crisis in men's mental health" — the suicide rate for men is four times higher than for women. The problem has long been culturally entrenched. Fredric Rabinowitz, psychology professor and author of *Deepening Psychotherapy With Men*, tells me in a phone call, "Men have internal shame for not living up to whatever ideals they imagine they should have achieved — whether it's having enough money, being further along in their careers, providing for their family. Because men mask their emotions, they feel isolated. One of the benefits of the men's group is the relief of finding out you're not the only one who feels shame". Participating in a larger community may explain the popularity of the Movember movement, in which millions of men grow moustaches every November to raise awareness of prostate cancer, testicular cancer and men's health. Because the only thing worse than walking around with a moustaches is having to talk about your butthole.

It may seem obvious that men don't like to ask for help, but the problem is so systemic and perplexing that a landmark 2003 study on masculinity and self-help was convened. What two PhD's determined was that men basically have to be *tricked* into seeking help by changing "the services to fit the 'average' man". In a way, that's what MDI has been doing. Men may see joining a support group as a sign of weakness, but joining a *team*? Good talk, coach.

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And so, here I am in a parking lot chasing a half-deflated volleyball into the bushes. All MDI team meetings start with a half-hour activity referred to as Fun & Physical. Tonight, these men are playing a modified game of volleyball with wacky rules (you can spike only with your non-dominant hand) and a "net" made from a row of folding chairs. This particular game is called Bro Ball, which is maybe the most embarrassing thing I'll hear tonight, but the rationale tracks. As Abe Moore, a 52-year-old IT specialist, says between rotations, "Fun & Physical allows men to get out of their heads. When you come to a meeting, you're not in a space to open your heart and be present".

I should admit that I came to this story with my own bias. I half suspected the group might be a cult. (Moore says he wondered the same thing at first.) Or that these meetings were for losers who were still sleeping on their moms' couches. Or, worse, that MDI was a place for misguided good ol' boys to talk about how they're the real victims in this whole #MeToo thing. But pretty quickly the men challenged my assumptions. At 50, Gregor (not his real name) is still boyishly handsome, a successful music producer who has worked alongside Grammy-winning musicians. He isn't someone who looks like >>

ILLUSTRATION BY **EDEL RODRIGUEZ**

he needs a support group. (See? Bias at work.) Gregor came to his first team meeting nearly 10 years ago, he tells me, at the invitation of a dad from his kid's school. He recalls playing soccer that night and admits to some initial misgivings. But he soon discovered something unexpected: The men weren't being coddled. They were being challenged. Gregor was surprised to find himself talking — a lot — about a problem he had at work: He'd promised to collaborate with a friend on a project but no longer had the time, yet his ego wouldn't let him walk away. "There was all this made-up stuff in my head about not letting my friend down", Gregor says. "Within 20 minutes, I had a clear path forward. These men helped me get out of my *own* way."

I saw similar exchanges at the meeting I attended — exchangesthat are best described as men publicly calling each other out on their bullsh!t. (This approach may be what separates MDI from more traditional support groups.) I can't reveal details of their discussion, but imagine how it might feel to watch a man admit he hadn't had sex with his wife in months, only to have the team grill him about it.

MDI President Geoff Tomlinson later explains that this technique is intentional. "If you got fired, you'd blame it on your boss being a dick. You'd get a beer with your buddies and they'd pat you on the back and say, 'You'll get a better job tomorrow!' But at your team meeting, you get the opposite experience. If you say you lost your job, they'll say, 'We're sorry that happened, but what part of this core relationship with your boss do you have to own? Let's get to the bottom of this, or you'll be back here in two years'." It seems to be effective, if not exactly polite. It's been a long time since a fistfight has broken out at an MDI meeting, Tomlinson says, but it has happened. "If someone gets pissed off", he says, "that'll intensify the men coming at him because it's touched a nerve".

Tomlinson should know; he's not only the President of MDI, he's also a client. He joined his first team in Toronto some 20 years ago at the urging of his boss, who suggested the meetings might help him understand why he kept getting passed over for promotions at work. "We remind people: *You* are the common denominator in your own story", says Tomlinson. Anyone who has ever been in therapy will recognise that phrase. What MDI really offers men is a set of action-oriented tools for personal growth and "teammates" to hold them accountable for their own behaviour.

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At the LA meeting, the elephant in the room is Harvey Weinstein and his abuses of power and the wrongs committed by other prominent men. Gregor is eager to address the subject. "If those men had been on a team", he says, "someone would have been holding them accountable before they hurt somebody. Before it was too late".

The nine men in this group come from diverse backgrounds, but they appear to be unified by the feeling of having missed out on something, be it an essential life lesson, rite of passage or guide to a life well lived. MDI helps them fill in those blanks. A man I'll call Jack (late 50s, blue-collar, works in aeronautics) tells me he came to MDI seven years ago, when his marriage was cratering. Jack had been raised by a father who was physically present but emotionally absent, he says. His father took him camping, but the man never provided guidance. "I was waiting for somebody to tell me what it was to be a man", Jack says, "for someone to say to me, 'These were the rules then, and these are the rules now'".

**Time and again I hear a similar refrain: The team saved someone's marriage, financial future, even life.**

What he found in this circle was a group of men willing to take the time to listen, which is increasingly rare. After he owned up to his own shortcomings ("My wife was bored with me; I needed to grow up"), his MDI team helped him rebuild himself and his confidence. For example, Jack had never been good with money — something he felt ashamed about — so his teammates made him treasurer. Encouraging concrete new life skills is just one way the group helps its members; other ways are more abstract.

Abe — the IT specialist — later shared his own story with me, and it was sobering. He'd never met his father, he says, didn't even know who the man was. Abe's mother had struggled with addiction, and his siblings were in and out of foster care. He came to his first team meeting at the age of 40, shortly after his wife kicked him out. His thought patterns were a cesspool of negativity, steeped over a lifetime of self-hate. "I felt like I'm a piece of sh!t", he says, "and that because I didn't have a father I couldn't be a good father". He wasn't the type of man to ask for help. But by learning to show up for his teammates, he learned to show up for his wife too. After a year, she invited him home. "Without the team", he says in maybe the most earnest voice I've ever heard in LA, "I wouldn't be married now".

Time and again I hear a similar refrain: The team saved someone's marriage, financial future, even life. It had helped men quit smoking or watch less porn. Or confront their own fathers, which is the central struggle of basically every male coming-of-age story ever told in this town.

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It's a difficult time to be a man. Professor Rabinowitz, who has hosted his own men's group meeting for 30 years and has a wait list for new members, says he hasn't seen such an influx of interest since the women's liberation movement sent men scrambling to redefine themselves. The whole thing can be corny as hell: At one point during the MDI meeting I attended, one man stared another dead in the eyes, put his hand on the other man's chest and thanked him for living his truth. But it can also be seriously humbling. It takes balls to be so emotionally naked.

The meeting ends at 10pm with the men shouting their team name, Arrowhead, into the sky like some high school football team. Each team chooses its own name. There's a group in New York, I later find out, that calls itself Massive Dump, a juvenile but funny play on the emotional release one feels after a team meeting. "Arrowhead" is more pointed, so to speak, hinting at the difficult work these team members must do on themselves to become better men as they shed bad habits and work through past trauma. "An arrowhead's razor-sharp edge comes from chipping away at what's not needed", says Gregor. In our post-Weinstein world, a man's best move may be to shut up and listen. But whether in the White House or working the drive-through at White Castle, it's clear we men have work to do — to chip away at the unnecessary, to craft a better instrument. Go, team. ■

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